

SECRET FREEDOM

ISSUE **43**

PART 3 OF 4

SEGA®



SONIC UNIVERSE™

COVERT
CHAOS



ARCHIECOMICS.COM

*Tra on Yardley
-Jim Amash
Steve D*

THE SAGA BEGINS.

"SONIC THE HEDGEHOG KEEPS GOING STRONG!"
-MTV



THE COMPLETE "DARKEST STORM" STORY ARC COLLECTED FOR THE 1ST TIME IN A GRAPHIC NOVEL! PLUS BONUS FEATURES!

SONIC SAGA SERIES

DARKEST STORM

ON SALE
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Welcome to the planet Mobius - - a world beyond what you know from the SEGA games! Where the newly formed Secret Freedom Fighters have banded together to put an end to King Ixis Naugus's reign of terror!

SONIC UNIVERSE™

PREVIOUSLY...

The city of New Mobotropolis is under SIEGE! Sonic the Hedgehog's home city continues to reel following the devastating attacks of Dr. Eggman. These attacks have led to the destruction of the city's heroes, the Freedom Fighters.

To make matters worse, the city has also been attacked from within! The evil Wizard Ixis Naugus and his apprentice Geoffrey St. John have usurped the crown of Acorn, and used their dark magic to turn public opinion in their favor. But such an unstable and evil ruler has put the entire kingdom in jeopardy, and in the shadows, a new team of Secret Freedom Fighters have formed to do the work that the public heroes can't do - put an end to Naugus's rule!

While Silver's squad took on Geoffrey far from home, Elias's squad set out to investigate Naugus's mysterious underground lair deep below the city. Once inside this ancient Ixis chamber, our heroes discovered that the evil wizard had undergone a bizarre mutation into a horrific monster - who quickly turned to attack!

Gigantic flame-monster? No thank you! Elias and his team smartly took off for the exit, but Naugus's new form proved too much for the inexperienced team and our heroes were last seen plunging to their doom...



WHO'S WHO



SILVER
THE HEDGEHOG
TIME TRAVELER
--CALL SIGN "ACE"



ELIAS ACORN
DEPOSED KING
--CALL SIGN "KING"



KING NAUGUS
CONNIVING IXIS
WIZARD



GEOFFREY
ST. JOHN
TRAITOR AND
IXIS APPRENTICE

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PRELUDE

THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO--
THE FORGOTTEN WARS.

IXIS MOGUL
LORD OF THE
ORDER OF
IXIS

PAH! WEAK-MINDED, SHORT-SIGHTED
TEMPLAR KNIGHTS. NOT
ONLY IS THEIR RESISTANCE
FUTILE, BUT THE BATTLES
WILL RAVAGE ALL MOBIUS.
PERHAPS I CAN CONJURE
A WAY TO MEND THEIR
WILLS TO MY OWN...?

IXIS VALE
ONE OF
MOGUL'S
FOUR
ELITE

MY LORD, I BRING
NEWS FROM THE
FRONTS AROUND
THE WORLD.
ALL OF IT IS
TROUBLING.

GO ON.

THERE ARE
REPORTS OF
CRIMES AGAINST
NATURE BY THE
ALBIONITES.
ON EVERY FRONT,
THEY SEEM TO
BE ABANDONING
VALOR IN FAVOR
OF RESULTS TO
COMBATING
OUR CUNNING.

I AM NOT
SURPRISED.
WE ARE THE
ORDER OF IXIS.
ONE CANNOT
SIMPLY OVER-
COME OUR
POWER BY
"PLAYING FAIR."
EVEN IF THEY
WERE TO
SLAUGHTER
US DOWN TO
THE LAST
WIZARD...

VALE'S CRYPT--
WINDY VALLEY--
SOLMERCA--
NOW

"...IT WOULD TAKE A
SMALL ARMY WITH-
OUT RESTRAINTS
TO BRING THAT
LAST WIZARD
DOWN."

SILVER THE
HEDGEHOG
CALL SIGN:
ACE

LARRY LYNX
CALL SIGN:
JOKER

I DON'T
CARE IF I'M
MODELED AFTER
A HEDGEHOG!
I HATE BEING
BURIED!

SHARD
CALL SIGN:
JACK

BLAM!

!GASP!

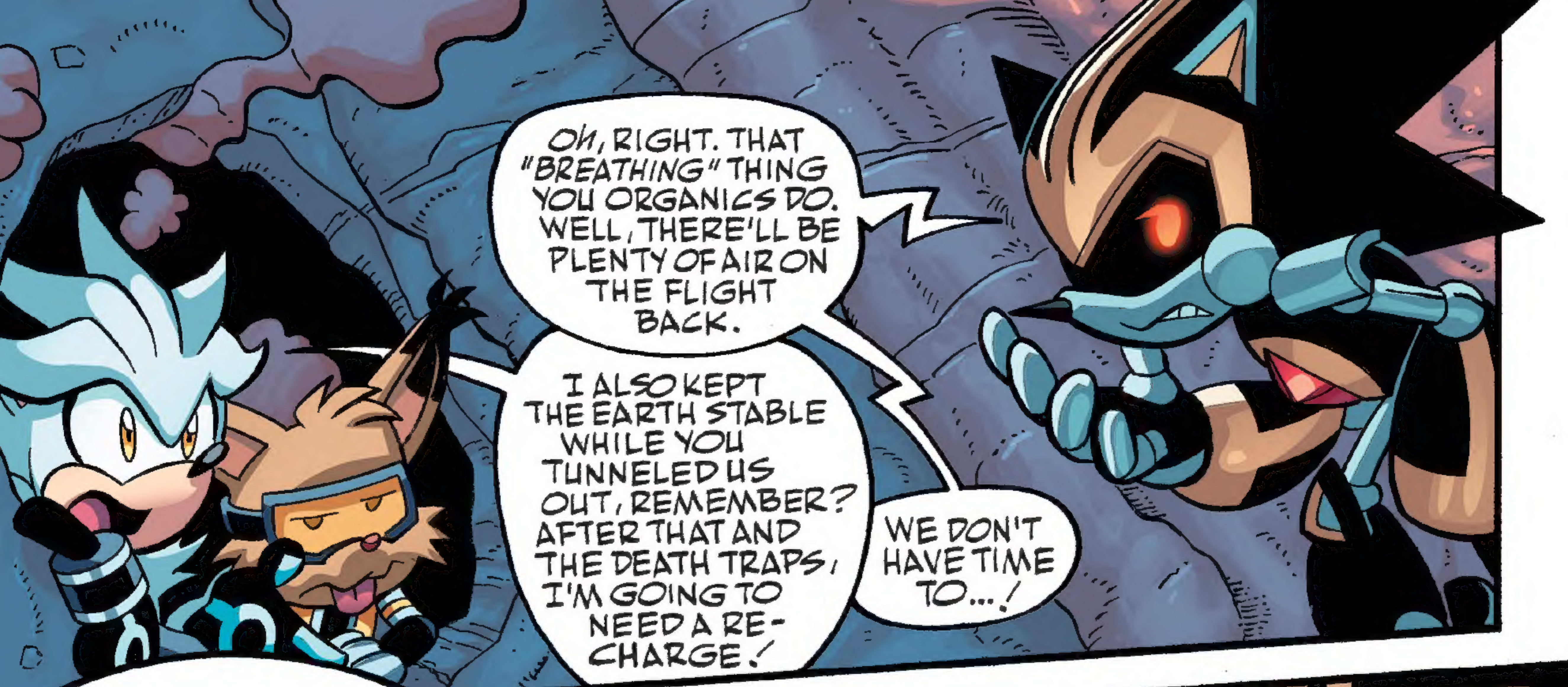
COME ON, BOYS! WE'VE GOT TO MAKE UP FOR LOST TIME AND TRACK GEOFFREY DOWN!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU TWO?

"WHAT'S WRONG?"

WE NEARLY SUFFOCATED AFTER BEING BURIED ALIVE!*

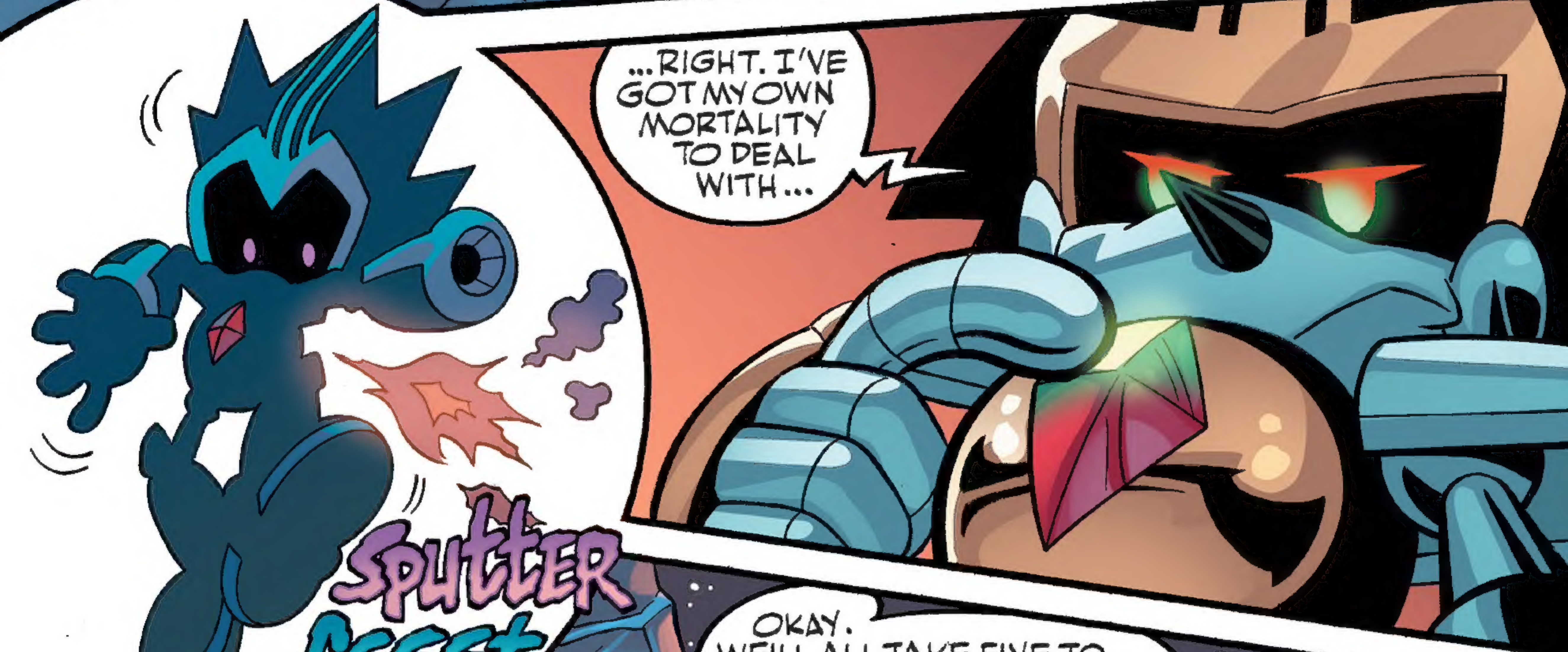
*EDITOR'S
NOTE: SU #41



OH, RIGHT. THAT "BREATHING" THING YOU ORGANICS DO. WELL, THERE'LL BE PLENTY OF AIR ON THE FLIGHT BACK.

I ALSO KEPT THE EARTH STABLE WHILE YOU TUNNELED US OUT, REMEMBER? AFTER THAT AND THE DEATH TRAPS, I'M GOING TO NEED A RE-CHARGE!

WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO...!

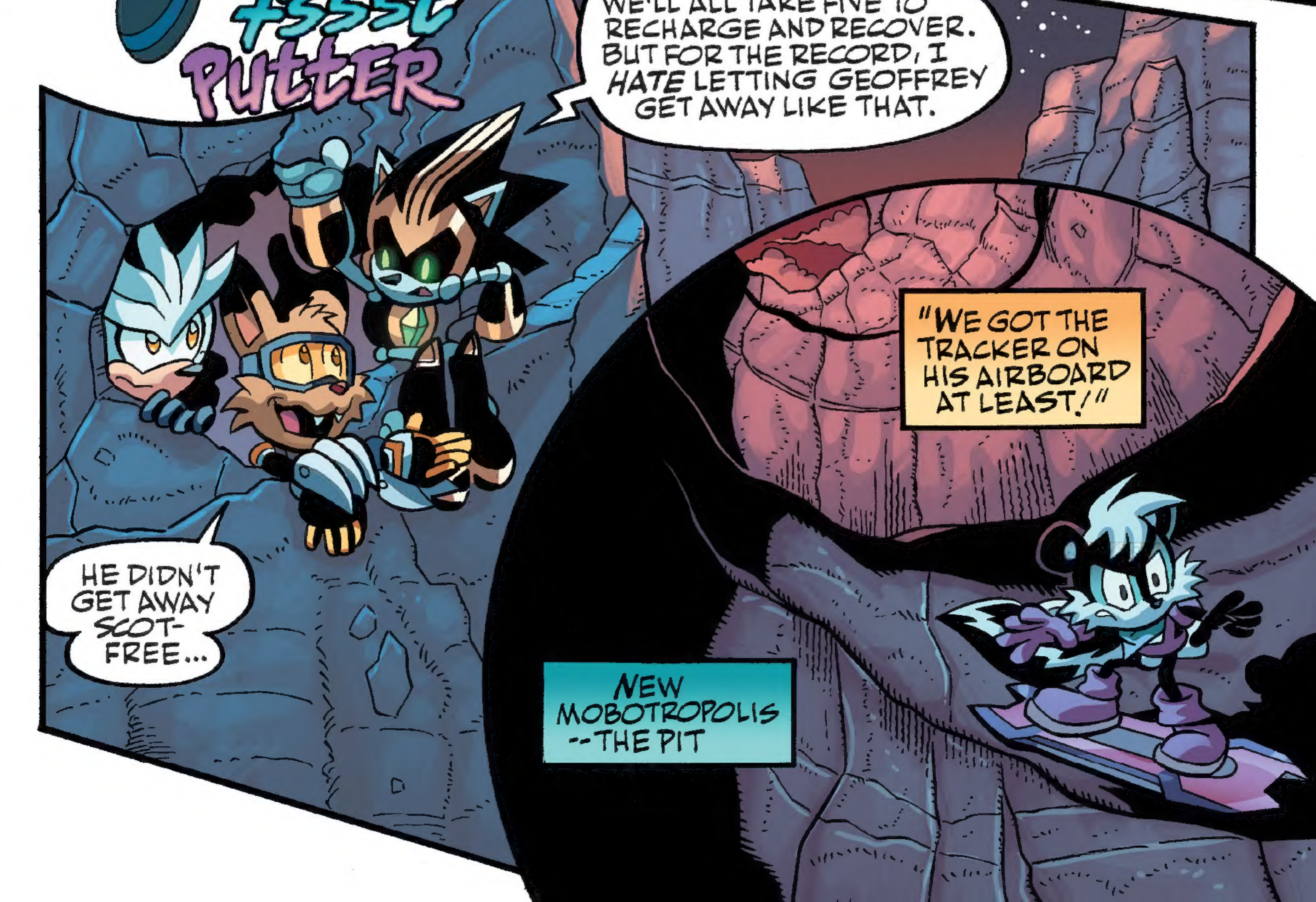


...RIGHT. I'VE GOT MY OWN MORTALITY TO DEAL WITH...



SPUTTER
fssst
PUTTER

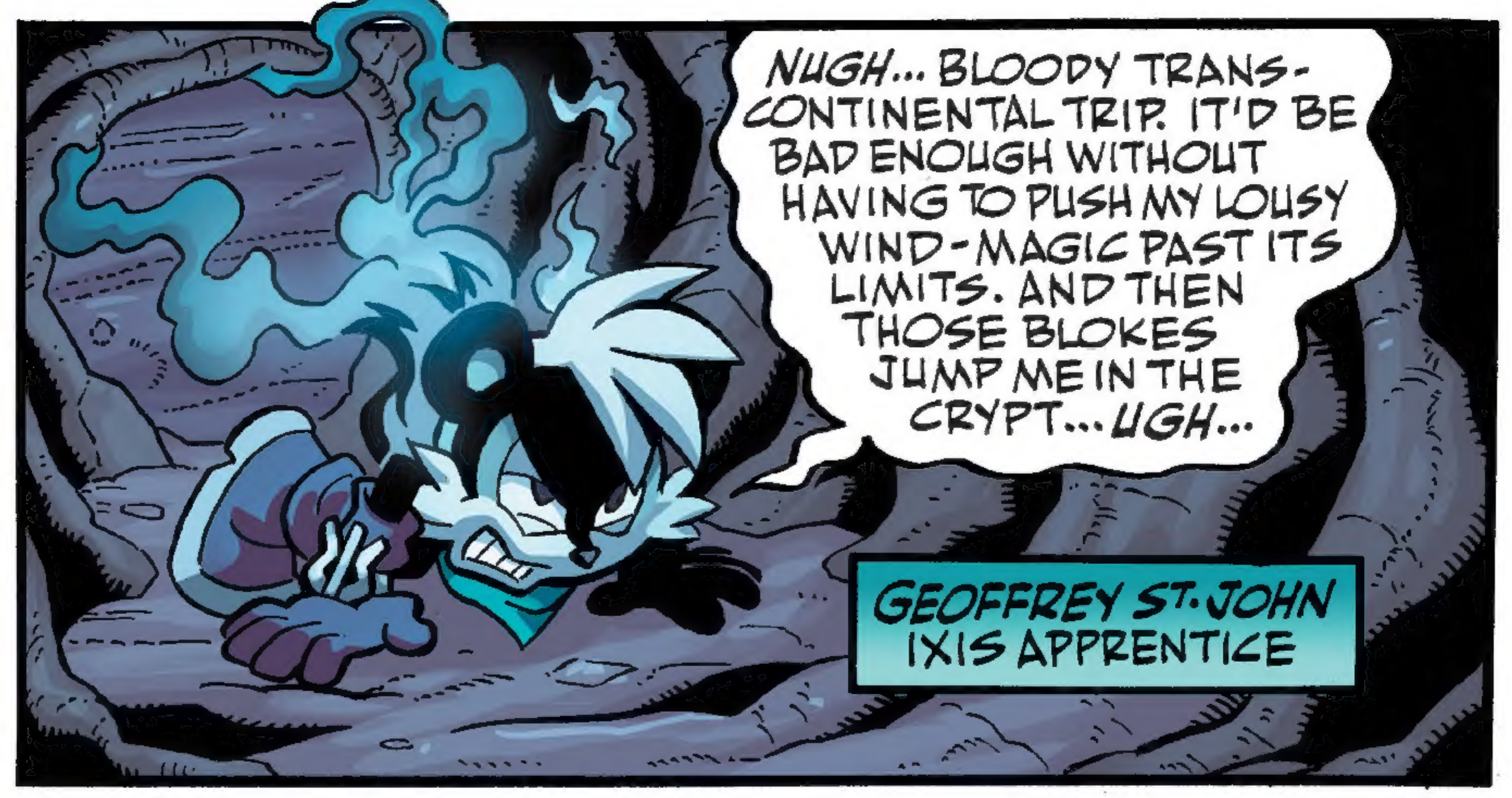
OKAY. WE'LL ALL TAKE FIVE TO RECHARGE AND RECOVER. BUT FOR THE RECORD, I HATE LETTING GEOFFREY GET AWAY LIKE THAT.



HE DIDN'T GET AWAY SCOT-FREE...

"WE GOT THE TRACKER ON HIS AIRBOARD AT LEAST!"

NEW MOBOTROPOLIS --THE PIT



UGH... BLOODY TRANS-CONTINENTAL TRIP. IT'D BE BAD ENOUGH WITHOUT HAVING TO PUSH MY LOUSY WIND-MAGIC PAST ITS LIMITS. AND THEN THOSE BLOKES JUMP ME IN THE CRYPT... UGH...

GEOFFREY ST. JOHN
IXIS APPRENTICE

HUH... AWFUL LOT OF MESS FOR A SECRET TUNNEL. DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THOSE SCORCH MARKS...



HPRHGH...

MASTER!
ARE YOU ALRIGHT?



WHAT HAPPENED OUTSI-- **YIE!**

LOWER YOUR VOICE, APPRENTICE.

WHAT-- UGH! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?!

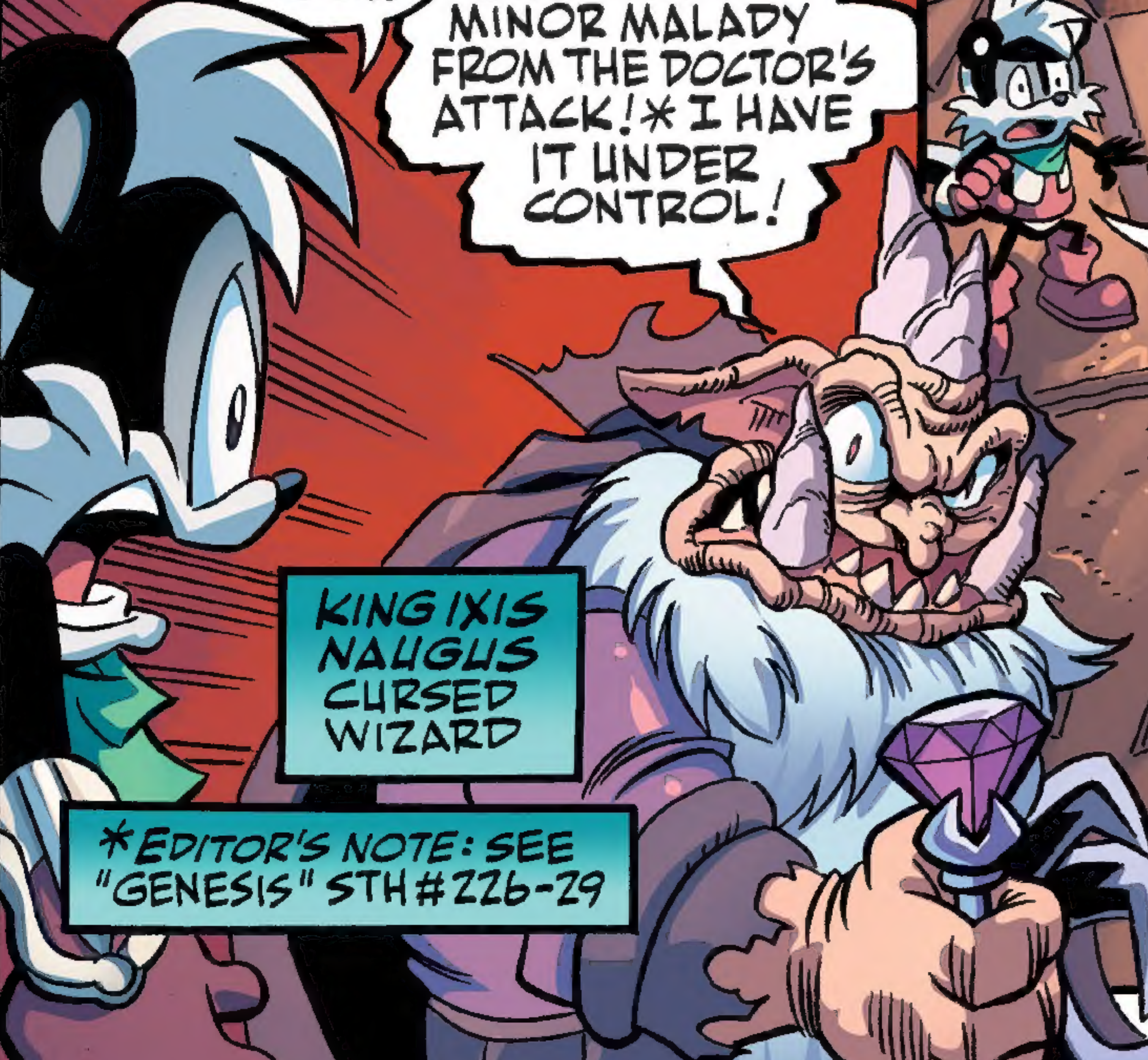
I'M FINE! A MINOR MALADY FROM THE DOCTOR'S ATTACK! * I HAVE IT UNDER CONTROL!

SEE? THE CHAOS EMERALD FIXES THE MUTATIONS.

YEAH, BUT... THE FACT THAT...!

DID YOU SUCCEED IN YOUR MISSION?

Y-YEAH. RAN INTO SOME RESISTANCE, BUT I TOOK CARE OF IT.



KING IXIS NAUGLIS
CURSED WIZARD

*EDITOR'S NOTE: SEE "GENESIS" STH #226-29



MMM... AS DID I.
BUT IT MATTERS NOT!
OUR ENEMIES HAVE
FALLEN, AND NOW I
HAVE ALL I NEED FOR
THE NEXT STEP IN
MY PLAN!

GREAT.
WHAT IS THE
NEXT STEP?

OR THE PLAN,
FOR THAT
MATTER?

I AM CRAFTING
THIS CHAMBER OF ANCIENT
IXIS DESIGN, NOT SEEN
SINCE THE FORGOTTEN
WARS!

ITS AMPLIFYING EFFECTS
ALONG WITH THE POWER
OF VALE'S BONES THAT
YOU BROUGHT ME WILL
ENABLE ME TO CAST
ONE OF OUR ORDER'S
MOST POTENT SPELLS!

A SPELL? ON WHAT?
WAIT... WHAT PART OF
THE CITY ARE WE
UNDER?

WE ARE UNDER THE
ROYAL MILITARY
HEADQUARTERS--
WHERE THE WEAK-
MINDED, SHORT-
SIGHTED COUNCIL
OF ALORN GATHERS.
SOON, MY WILL
SHALL REPLACE THEIRS!



"WITH ABSOLUTE CONTROL
OF THE GOVERNMENT, I
WILL COMMAND THE PEOPLE
AS I SEE FIT AND REBUILD
THE ORDER OF IXIS!"



"THE CITY WILL BECOME
MY ARMY, AND NONE
WILL BE ABLE TO
STAND AGAINST
US!!"

HAHAHAHA!



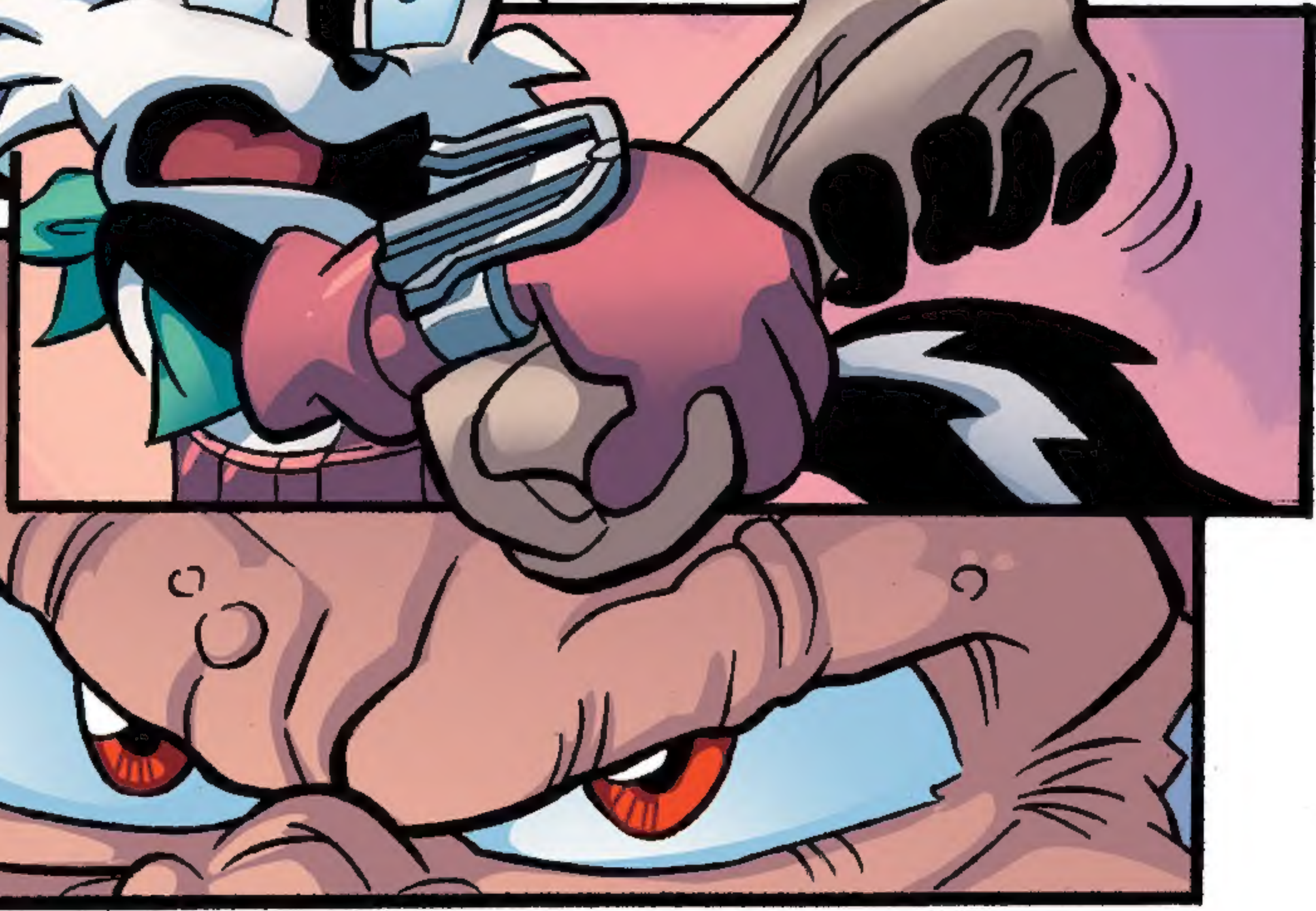


I'VE SUPPORTED YOU ALL THIS TIME BECAUSE I THOUGHT YOU COULD MAKE A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE!

FOR ALL YOUR ECCENTRICITIES, YOU WERE STILL A STEP UP FROM THE ACORNS!

YOU'VE GOT TO CROSS A FEW LINES TO MAKE THINGS CHANGE, BUT THIS-- THIS GOES TOO FAR!

WHO ARE YOU TO LECTURE ON MORALITY? YOU'VE SPENT YOUR LIFE LYING, STEALING AND BETRAYING EVERYONE YOU'VE EVER MET TO SERVE ME.



HOW DO YOU PLAN TO DEFY ME? YOU CAN'T DEFEAT ME ON YOUR OWN.

NO FREEDOM FIGHTER WOULD TRUST YOU.

MY WAY IS THE ONLY OPTION LEFT TO YOU.



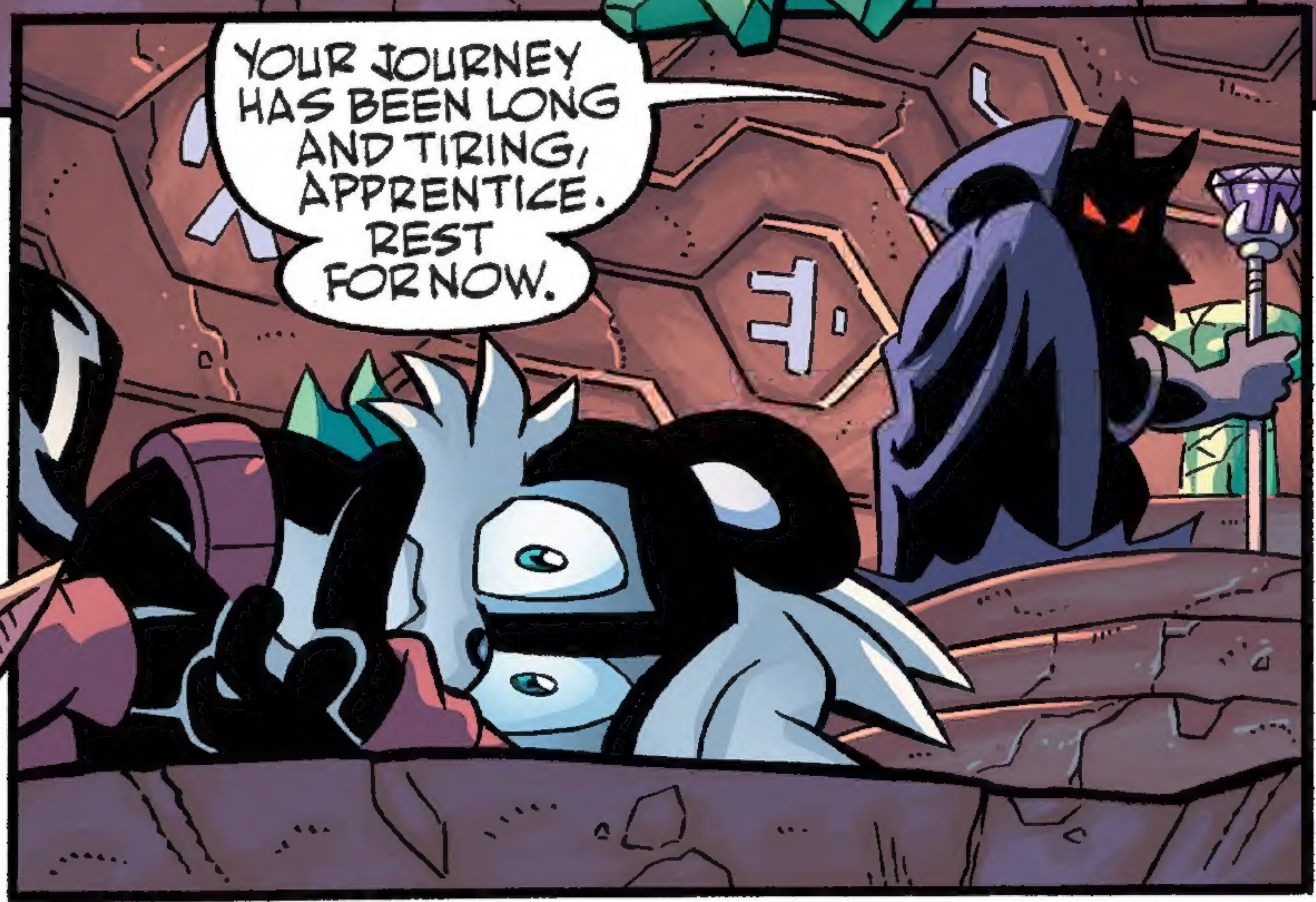
VERY GOOD.

I WILL FORGIVE THIS LAPSE IN JUDGMENT.

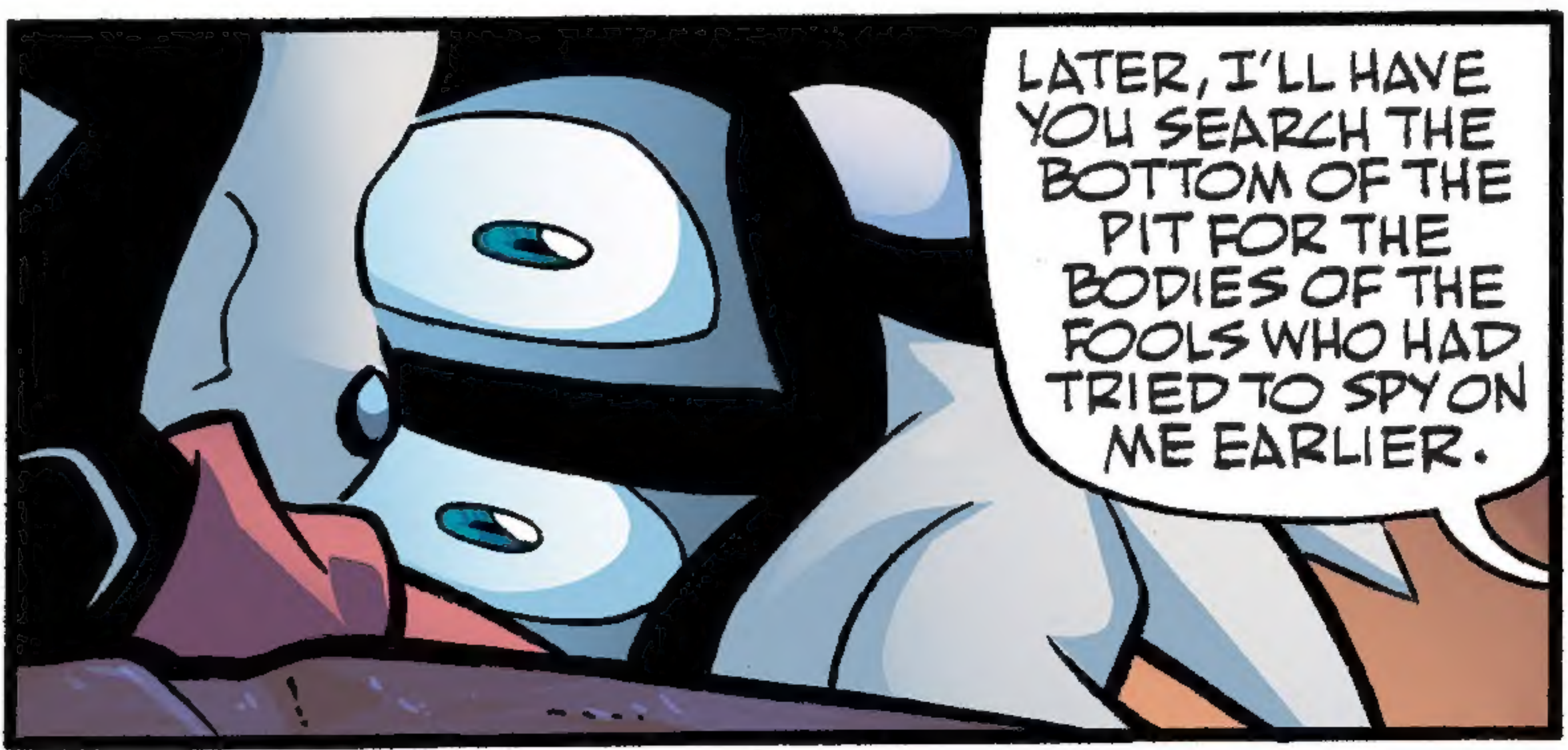


YOU WANTED PEACE AND PROTECTION FOR THE KINGDOM, NO? WITH THE IXIS MAGICKS AND MY GUIDING HAND, THE CITIZENS WILL KNOW A NEW AGE OF PROSPERITY!

AND WITH THE CITY IN MY THRALL, I'LL HAVE TIME TO CURE MYSELF OF... WHATEVER IT WAS THAT EGGMAN DID TO AWAKEN THE GHOSTS WITHIN ME...



YOUR JOURNEY HAS BEEN LONG AND TIRING, APPRENTICE. REST FOR NOW.



LATER, I'LL HAVE YOU SEARCH THE BOTTOM OF THE PIT FOR THE BODIES OF THE FOOLS WHO HAD TRIED TO SPY ON ME EARLIER.



NEW MOBOTROPOLIS--
SECRET HQ--MUCH LATER...

HARVEY
WHO
DIRECTOR
OF THE
SECRET
FREEDOM
FIGHTERS

I SENT A
LYNX WHO
WARPS
PROBABILITY
JUST BY
STANDING
THERE!

THIS IS
NOTHING SHORT
OF LUDICROUS!

I SENT A KID
WHO CAN MOVE
MOUNTAINS WITH
HIS MIND!

I SENT IN A
SUPER-BADNIK WHO
FOUGHT SONIC TO A
STAND-STILL!

AND ALL THREE
OF YOU COULDN'T
STOP
**ONE
SKUNK?!**

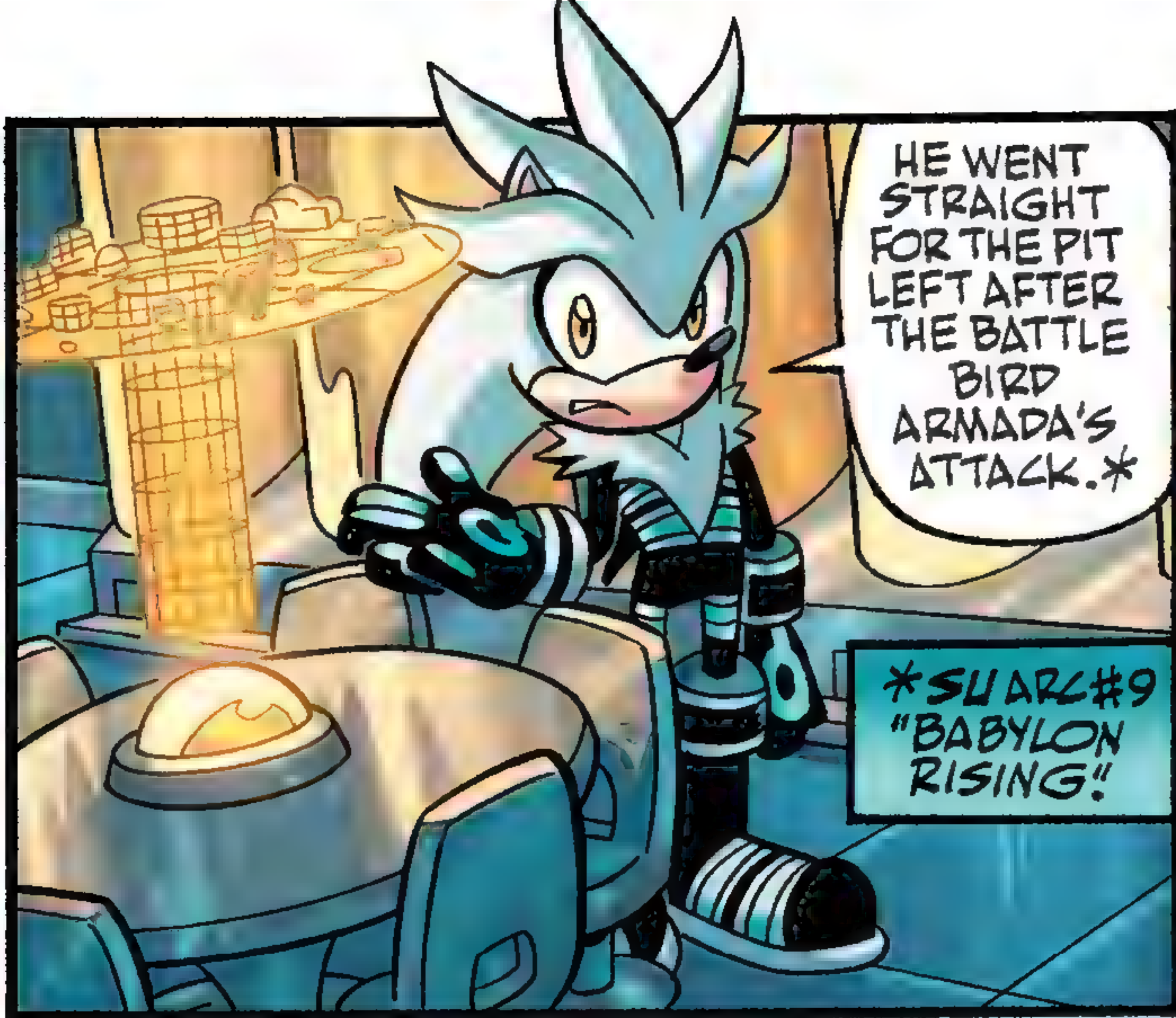
WELL...
WHEN YOU
PUT IT
THAT
WAY...

GRANTED
HE WAS A
MAGICAL
SKUNK...

WHO ALSO WAS
TRAINED SINCE
HE WAS A BOY.
THE REST OF US
ARE NEW TO
COVERT
OPERATIONS.
AND WE DID
PLANT A TRACKER
ON HIS
AIRBOARD.

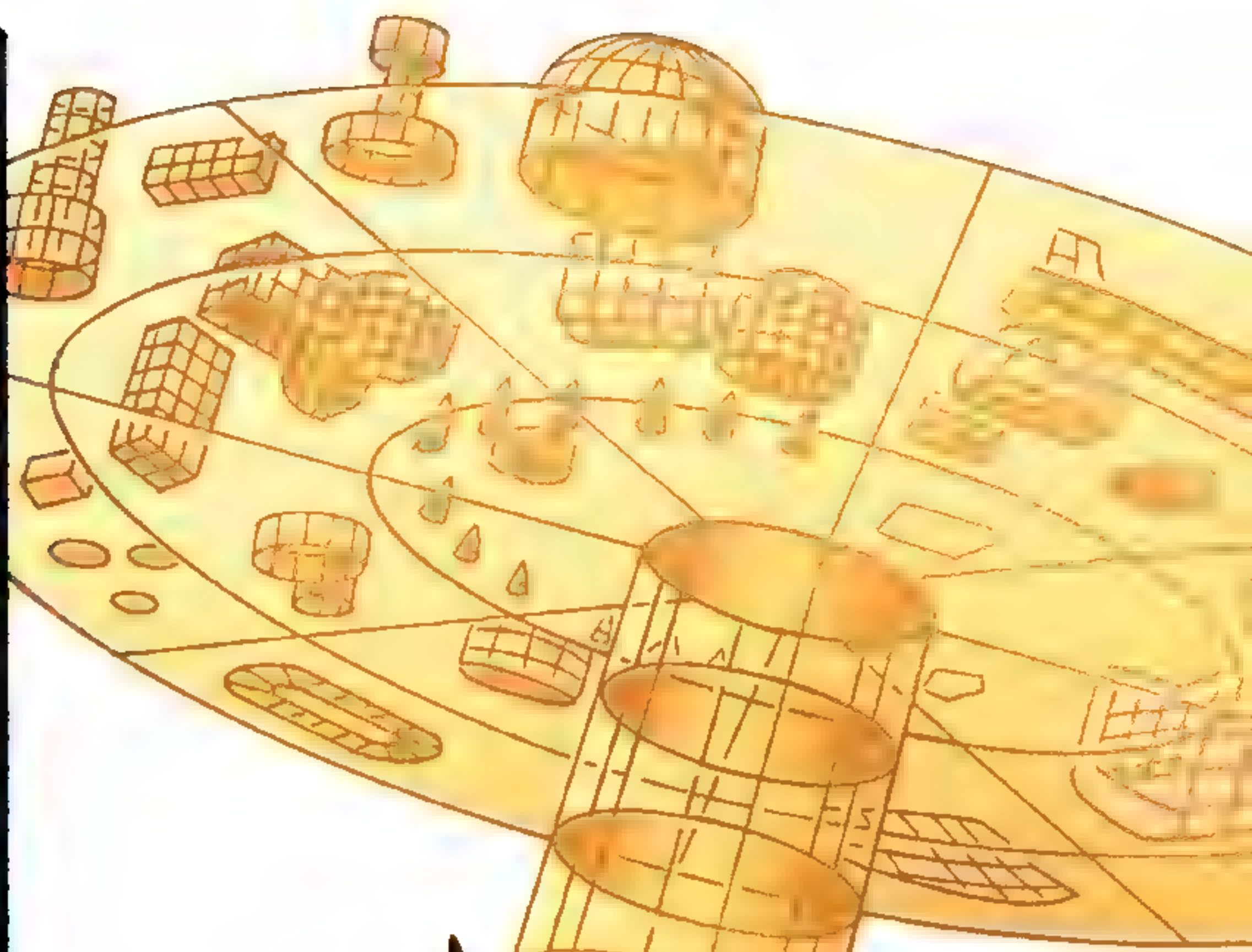
AND...?

WHERE
DID IT
LEAD?



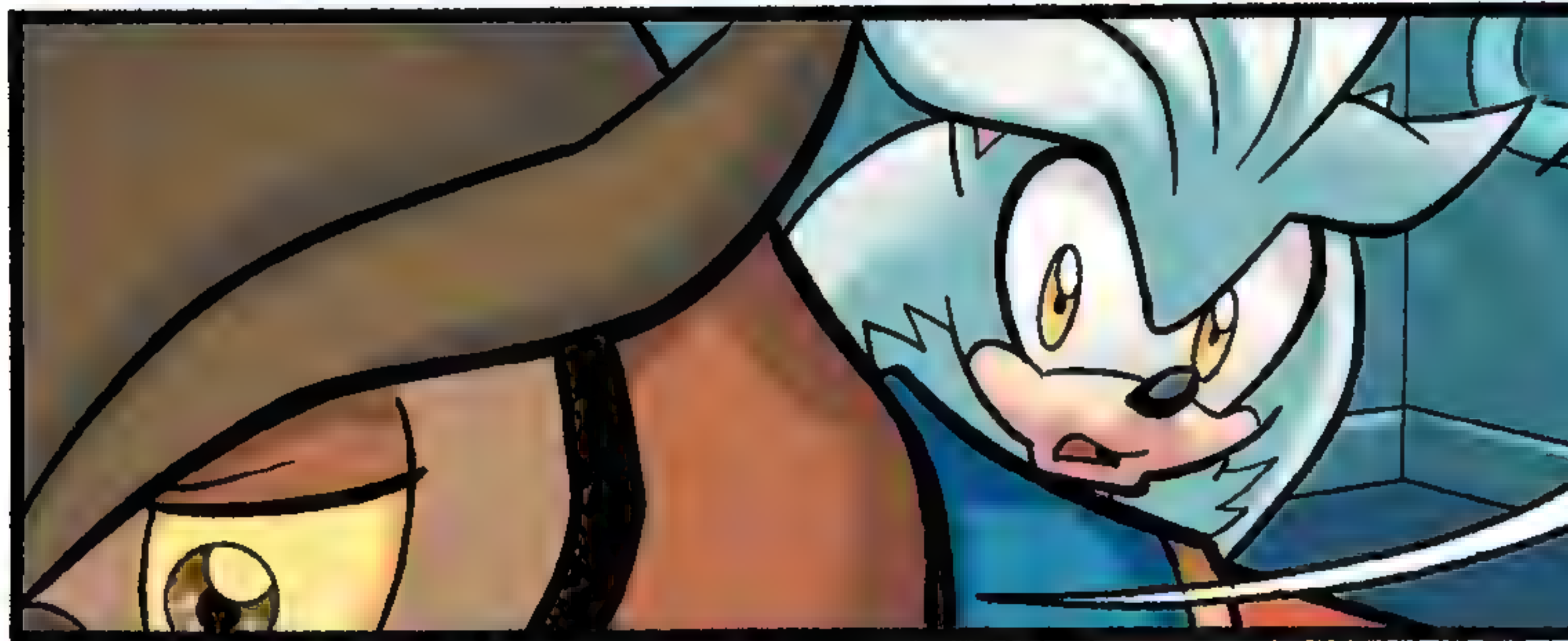
HE WENT STRAIGHT FOR THE PIT LEFT AFTER THE BATTLE BIRD ARMADA'S ATTACK.*

*SUARL#9 "BABYLON RISING!"



SO... RIGHT BACK TO THE CITY... WHERE WE STARTED FROM...

NO, MORE THAN THAT. AGENT KING'S TEAM TRACKED NAUGUS TO THE SAME LOCATION THE DAY YOU WENT AFTER ST. JOHN.



AND WHAT DID THEY FIND?

I DON'T KNOW. THEY'VE NOT RETURNED, AND THAT IS A CONCERN. HMMMM... ANCIENT TOTEMS, GREAT ATTENTION TO THE UNDERGROUND... HE MUST BE PLOTTING SOMETHING BIG.

MAYBE THEY WERE AT RISK OF BEING SPOTTED AND HAD TO LAY LOW?



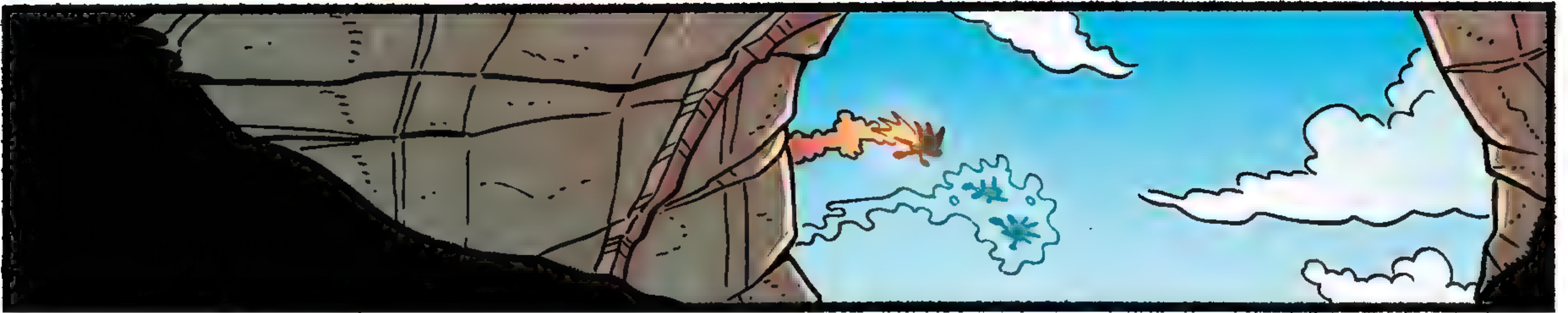
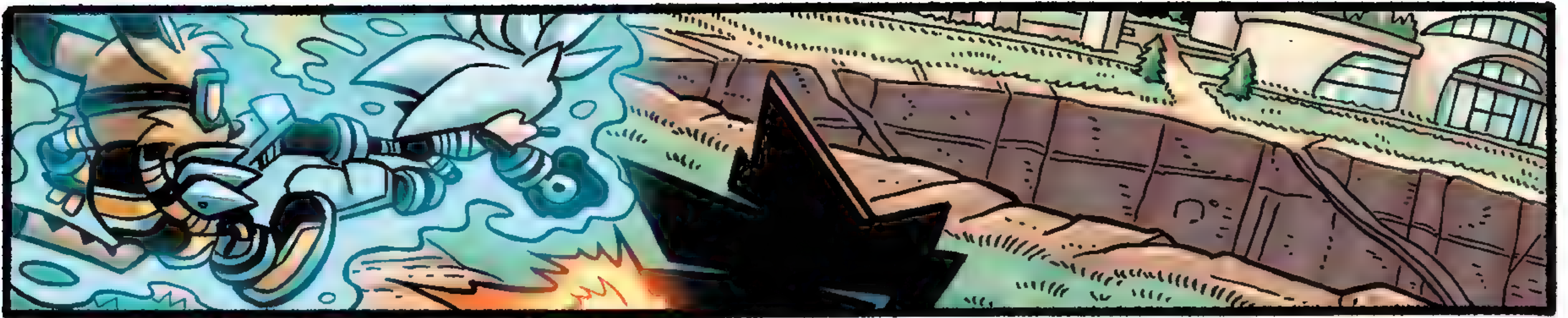
OR MAYBE NAUGUS FOUND THEM AND MADE SURE THEY'D NEVER REPORT IN.

KNOWING OUR LUCK SO FAR...



SEARCH THAT PIT TOP TO BOTTOM!

I WANT OUR AGENTS BROUGHT BACK-- THEY'VE GOT WORK TO DO!



ENGAGING
INFRA-RED
VISION...

HELLO?
ANYONE DOWN
THERE?

OH, PLEASE
LET SOMEONE
BE ALIVE...



ANYONE FRIENDLY?
JACK, I CAN'T
SEE WHO...

WHOO,
LADIES!
STAND DOWN.
AGENT
ACE?

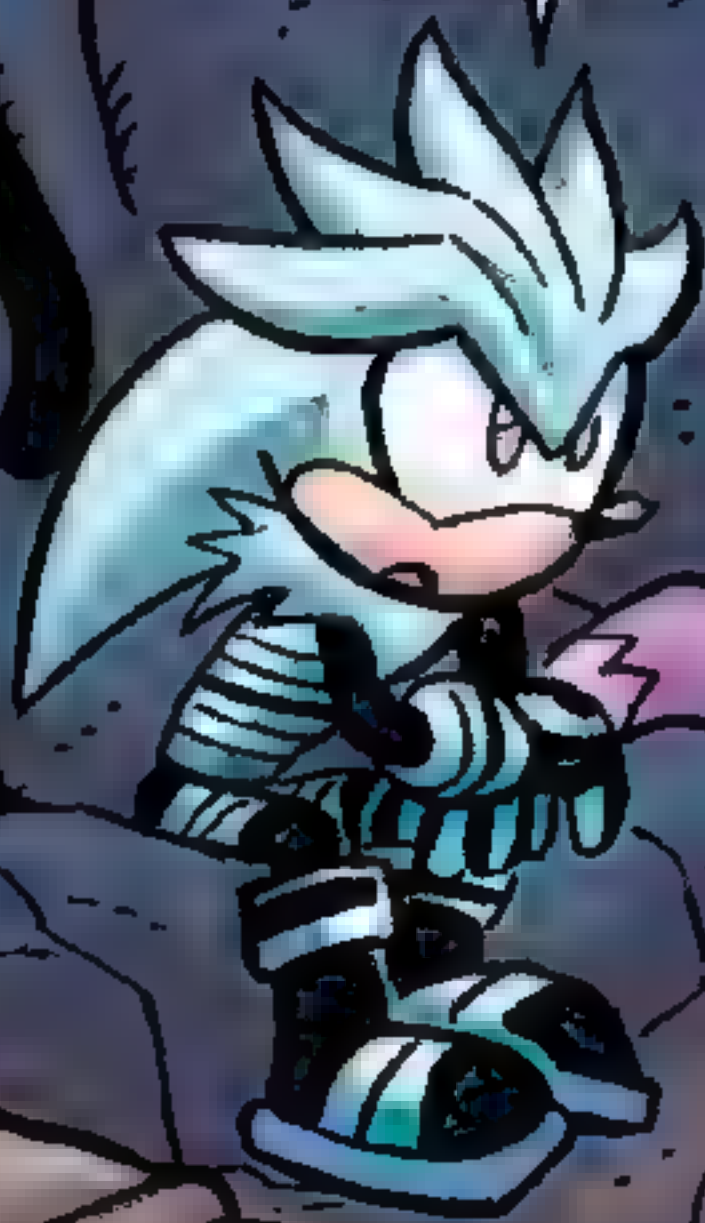


YOU'RE
A SIGHT
FOR SORE
EYES!

ARE YOU BADLY HURT?

NO. THE WING-SUITS GOT US DOWN SAFELY...

SAFELY ENOUGH!



... BUT WE HAD NO WAY OF CLIMBING ALL THE WAY OUT, OR MAKING SURE NAUGUS WASN'T COMING BACK FOR US.

SO HE DID FIND YOU.

YEAH. SOMETHING'S HAPPENING TO HIM. HE'S... CHANGING.

BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE FOUND HIM CONSTRUCTING SOME KIND OF A RITUAL ROOM UNDER THE ROYAL MILITARY HEADQUARTERS!

WELL, HE SENT GEOFFREY TO ROB THE CRYPT OF SOME ANCIENT IXIS WIZARD AND BRING THE REMAINS BACK HERE.

SO... A RITUAL ROOM AND ANCIENT REMAINS. HE'S PUTTING TOGETHER SOME KIND OF SPELL...?

AND IT'S EITHER GOING TO AFFECT THE MILITARY OR THE COUNCIL OF ACORN. MY GUESS IS THE COUNCIL. THERE'S NO WAY HE'S HAPPY SHARING POWER.

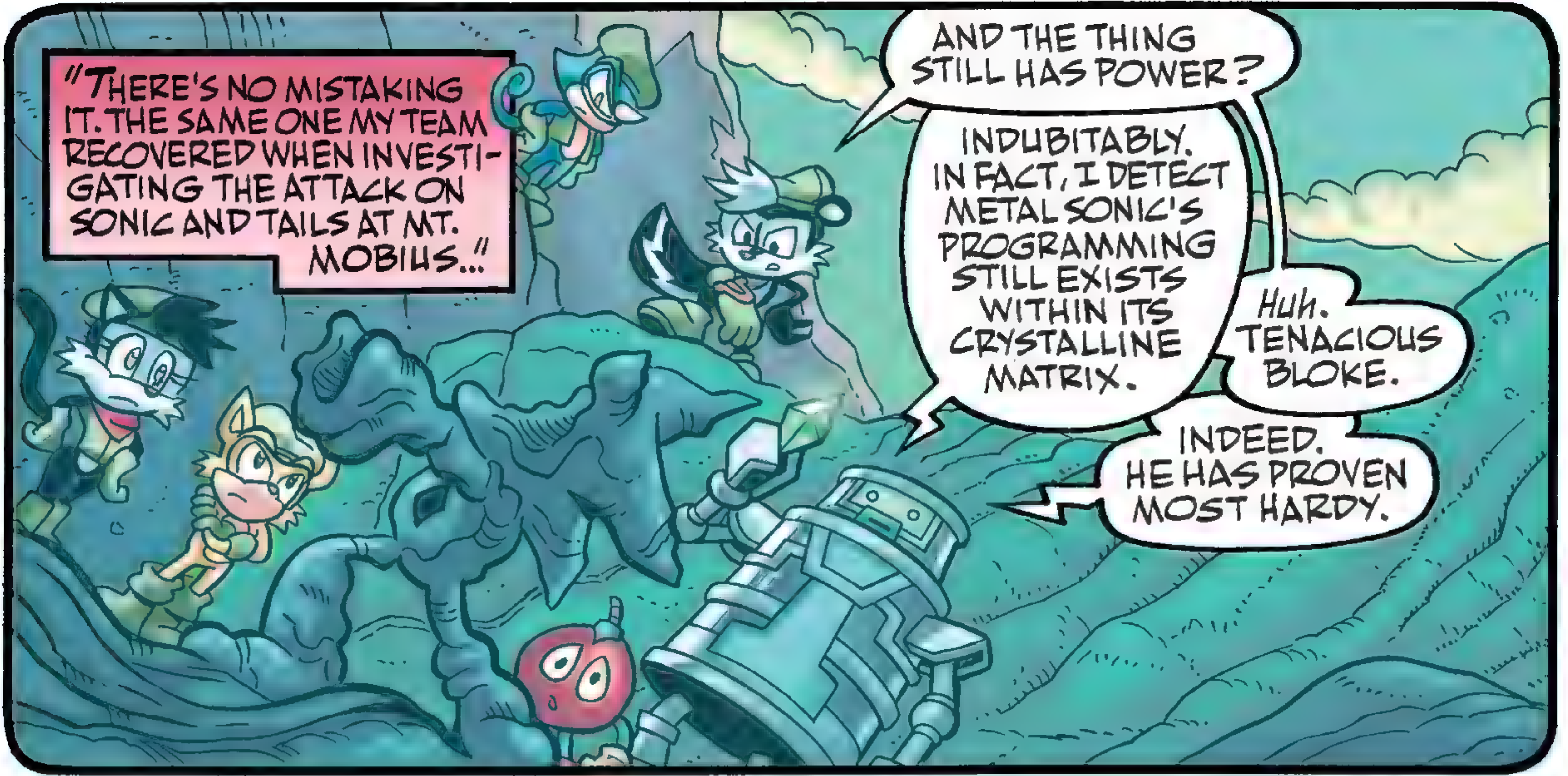
IF HE WERE TO CONTROL THE MILITARY, HE COULD OVERTHROW THE COUNCIL.

OR ELIMINATE THE MILITARY AND LEAVE ONLY TEAM FREEDOM TO RESIST HIM.

THAT GEM...

OR MAYBE HE'S JUST GOT AN OLD RECIPE FOR QUICHE. A REALLY OLD RECIPE.

"... THAT'S METAL SONIC'S POWER GEM CORE! "



"THERE'S NO MISTAKING IT. THE SAME ONE MY TEAM RECOVERED WHEN INVESTIGATING THE ATTACK ON SONIC AND TAILS AT MT. MOBIUS...!"

AND THE THING STILL HAS POWER?

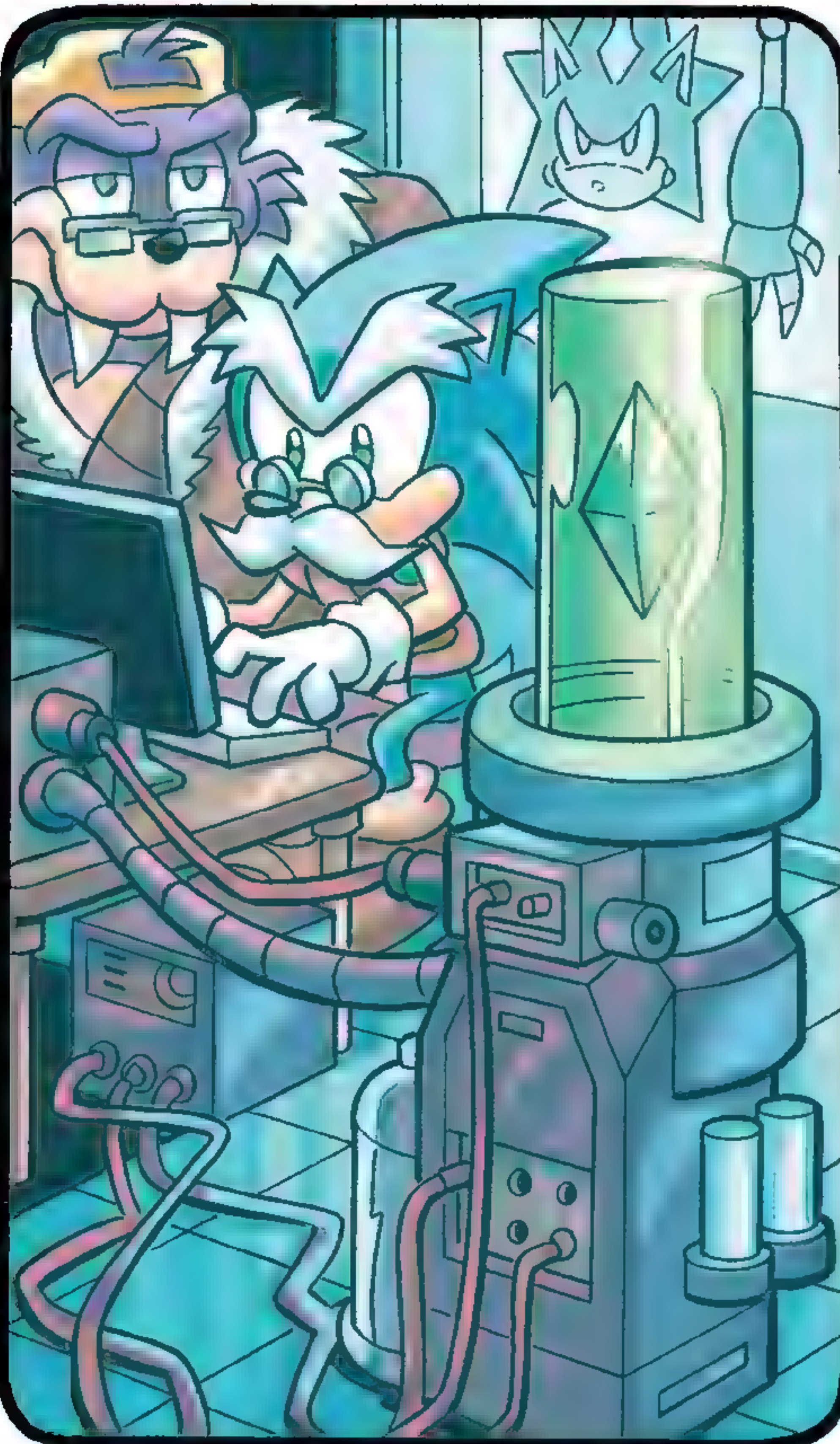
INDUBITABLY. IN FACT, I DETECT METAL SONIC'S PROGRAMMING STILL EXISTS WITHIN ITS CRYSTALLINE MATRIX.

Huh. TENACIOUS BLOKE.

INDEED. HE HAS PROVEN MOST HARDY.



"WHEN ROBOTNIK RETURNED, I MADE A POINT OF STEALING THE CORE BACK. I DIDN'T WANT HIM RECOVERING HIS BEST CREATION..."



"...AND IT TURNED OUT TO BE HANDY WHEN SIR CHARLES WAS ORDERED TO MAKE THE METAL SONIC TROOPERS. NOT THAT HE LET THAT BIT OF INFO CIRCULATE."

SO... A BUNCH OF COVERT AGENTS WITH METAL SONIC AS BACK-UP. EITHER CHARLES OR ROTOR IS PLAYING DOUBLE-AGENT--OR BOTH. AND THERE'S ONLY ONE OLD BIRD I KNOW WHO'S CRAZY ENOUGH TO PULL SOMETHING LIKE THIS...





WELL... WE'VE GOT AN IDEA OF WHAT NAUGUS IS UP TO... BUT I DON'T SEE HOW HIS ELEMENTAL SORCERY OR SHADOW-MELDING COULD FACTOR IN HERE. WE NEED ANSWERS IF WE'RE GOING TO MAKE AN INFORMED MOVE.

WE NEED TO INTERROGATE GEOFFREY!



HE PROVED HE'S SLIPPERY. HE'S GOTTEN THE JUMP ON SONIC * AND EVADED AGENT ACE'S TEAM.

SO, IT'S GOING TO TAKE US ALL, STRIKING AT ONCE, TO TAKE HIM DOWN. AND I MEAN HARD.

YEAH! TIME FOR SOME PAYBACK!

* SONIC ARCHIVES VOL. II AND STH # 219



OR I COULD JUST ASK HIM.



FORGET IT. HE ALREADY KNOWS YOU'RE AGAINST HIM. THERE'S NO WAY HE'D WILLINGLY GIVE INFORMATION UP.

I'M NOT SO SURE.



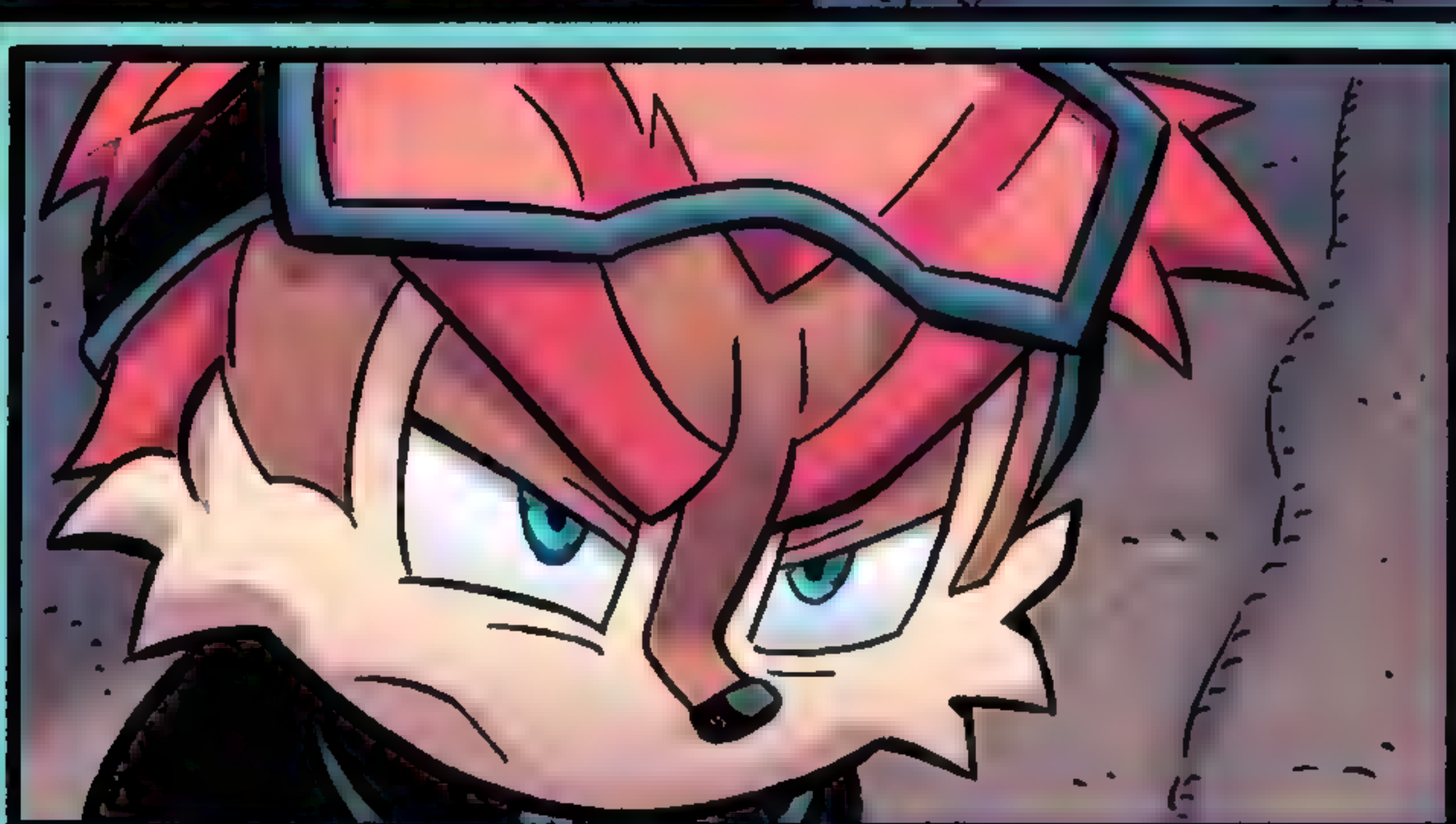
I THINK I CAN APPEAL TO HIS BETTER SENSES.

HE HAS NO BETTER SENSES! HE'S A FILTHY, BACK-STABBING--!

YOU'RE LETTING THIS GET PERSONAL. LET ACE HAVE HIS SAY.

I JUST THINK... LOOK. I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO THROW EVERYTHING INTO A PLAN WITH THE BEST INTENTIONS, AND FOR IT TO... WELL, FALL APART. GEOFFREY SAYS HE WANTS A BETTER GOVERNMENT FOR HIS PEOPLE, AND MOST OF HIS LIFE HE GREW UP ON NAUGUS'S TEACHINGS.

I THINK HE WAS OUT TO DO GOOD. AND MAYBE THIS ISN'T TURNING OUT LIKE HE PLANNED. IT'S HARD TO BACK OUT OF A THING LIKE THAT, AND HE DOESN'T HAVE A TEAM TO FALL BACK ON LIKE I DO NOW.



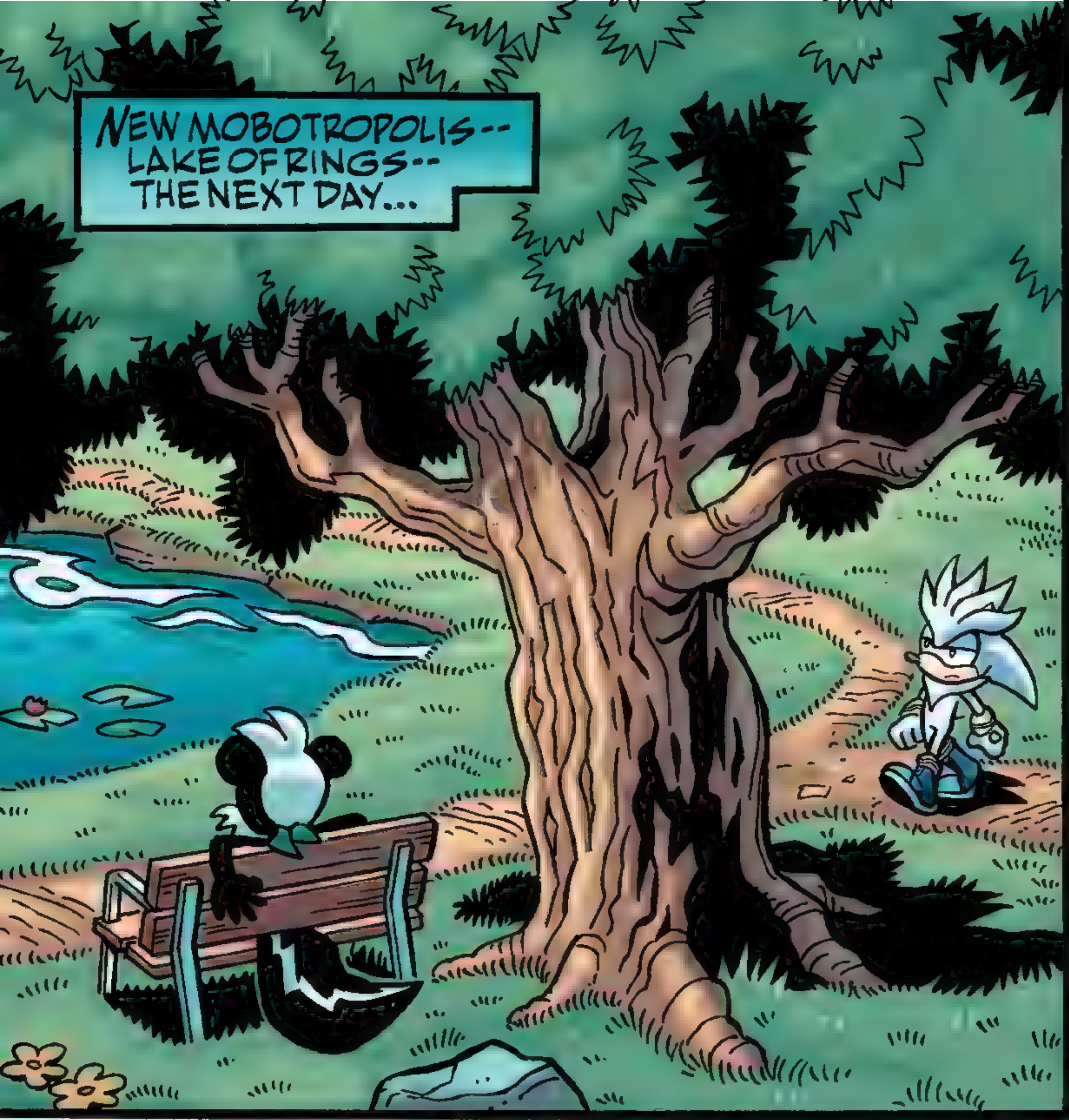
OKAY. WE'LL TRY IT YOUR WAY FIRST. ASK HIM.

BUT IF HE DOESN'T COOPERATE, WE MOVE IN.

YOU GOT IT.

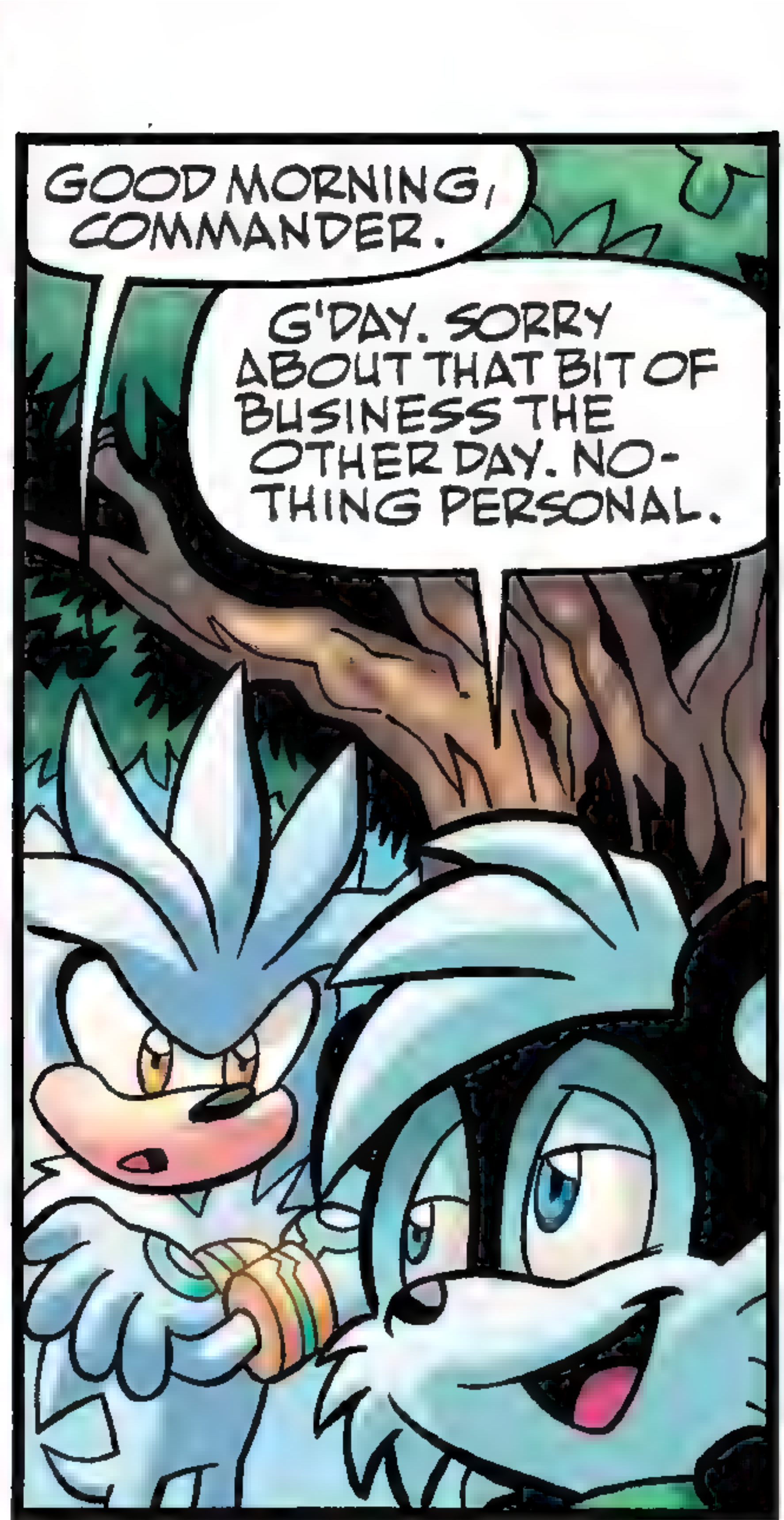


NEW MOBOTROPOLIS--
LAKE OF RINGS--
THE NEXT DAY...



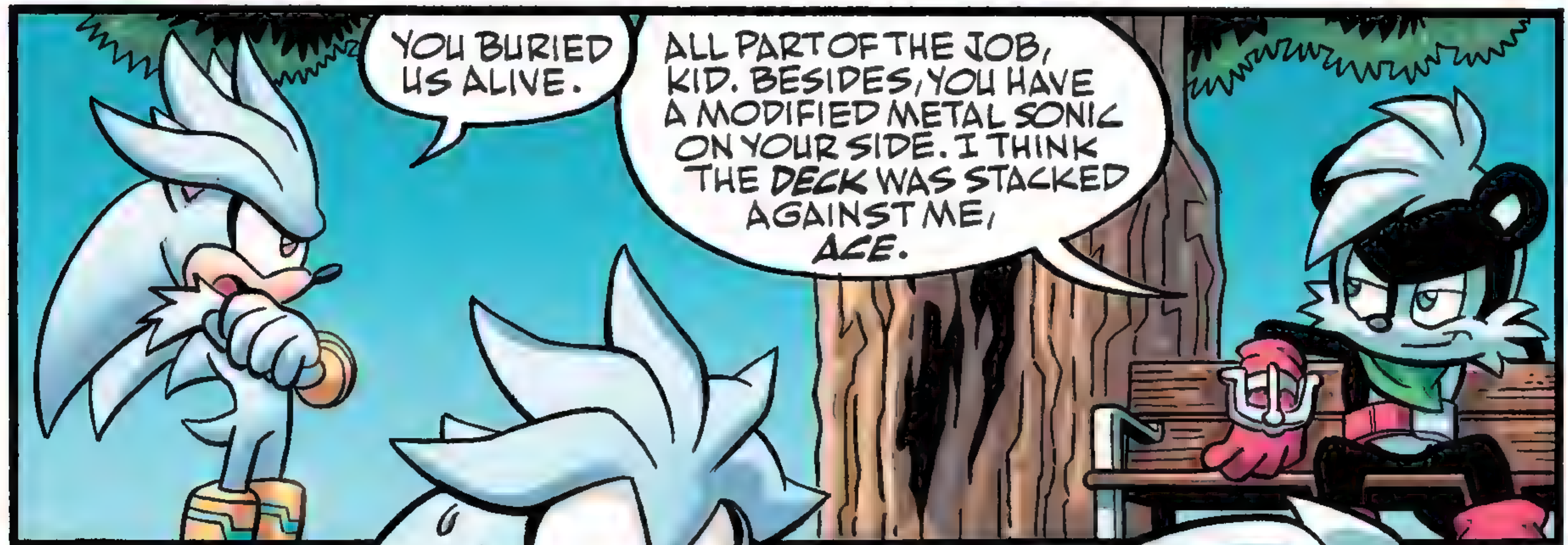
GOOD MORNING,
COMMANDER.

G'DAY. SORRY
ABOUT THAT BIT OF
BUSINESS THE
OTHER DAY. NO-
THING PERSONAL.



YOU BURIED
US ALIVE.

ALL PART OF THE JOB,
KID. BESIDES, YOU HAVE
A MODIFIED METAL SONIC
ON YOUR SIDE. I THINK
THE DECK WAS STACKED
AGAINST ME,
ACE.



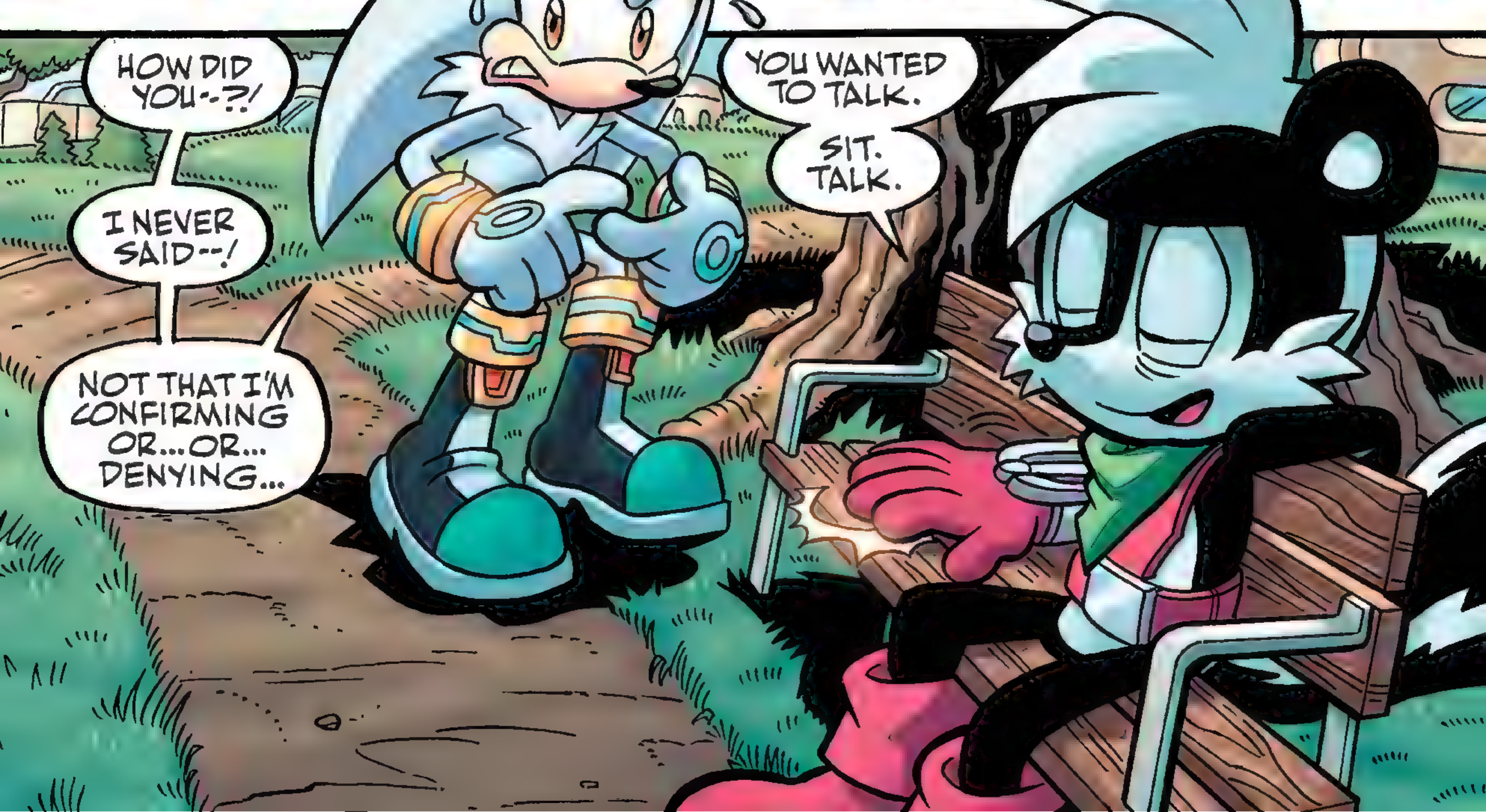
HOW DID
YOU--?!

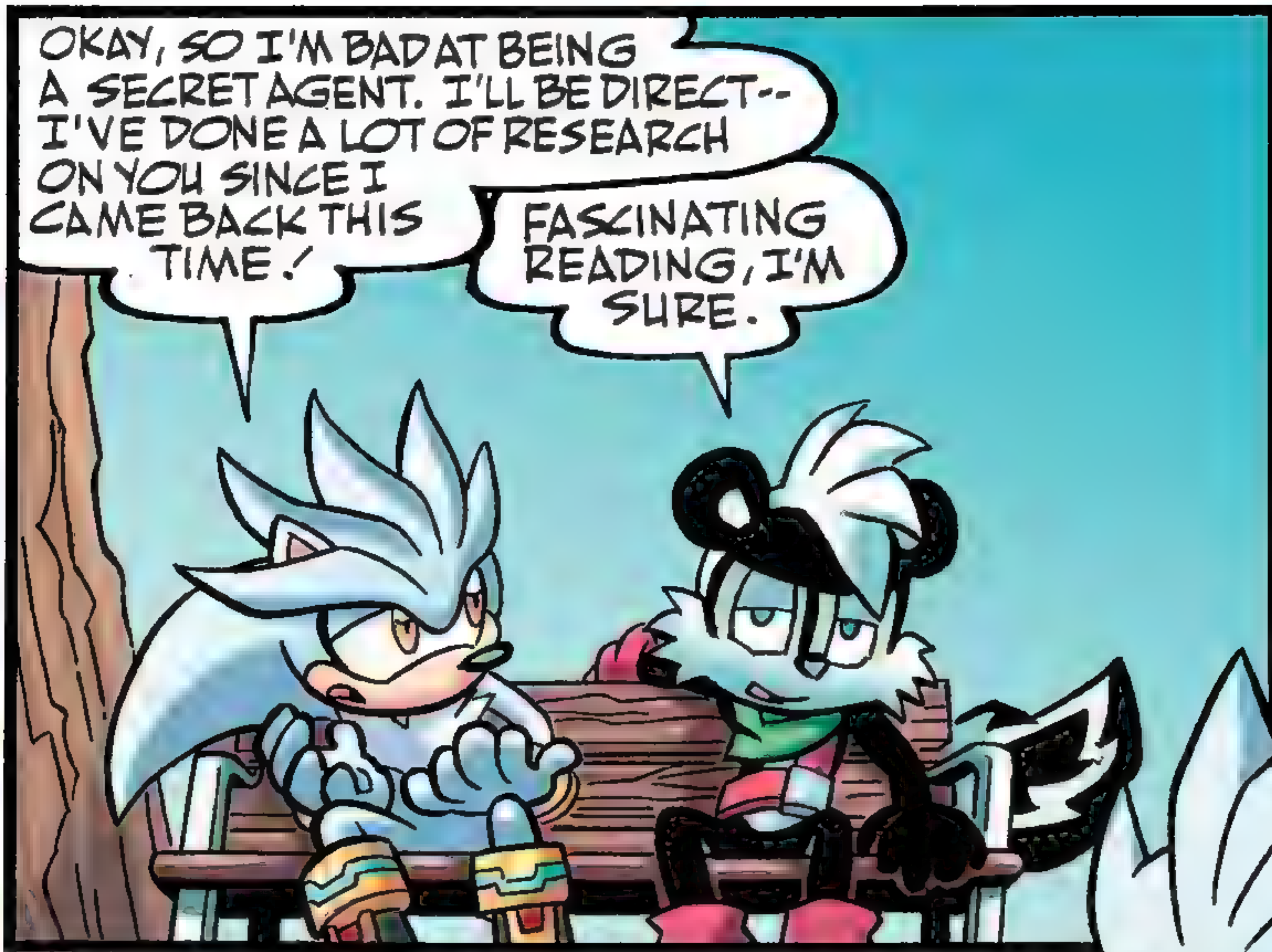
I NEVER
SAID--!

NOT THAT I'M
CONFIRMING
OR...OR...
DENYING...

YOU WANTED
TO TALK.

SIT.
TALK.





OKAY, SO I'M BAD AT BEING A SECRET AGENT. I'LL BE DIRECT-- I'VE DONE A LOT OF RESEARCH ON YOU SINCE I CAME BACK THIS TIME!

FASCINATING READING, I'M SURE.

YES, HONESTLY. AND FROM ALL THE STUFF I'VE READ ON ALL THE STUFF YOU'VE DONE I'VE COME TO THIS CONCLUSION: YOU'D NEVER INTENTIONALLY BRING HARM TO THE CITY OR ITS CITIZENS!

Mmm...



I THINK YOU'LL DO WHAT YOU THINK IS RIGHT.

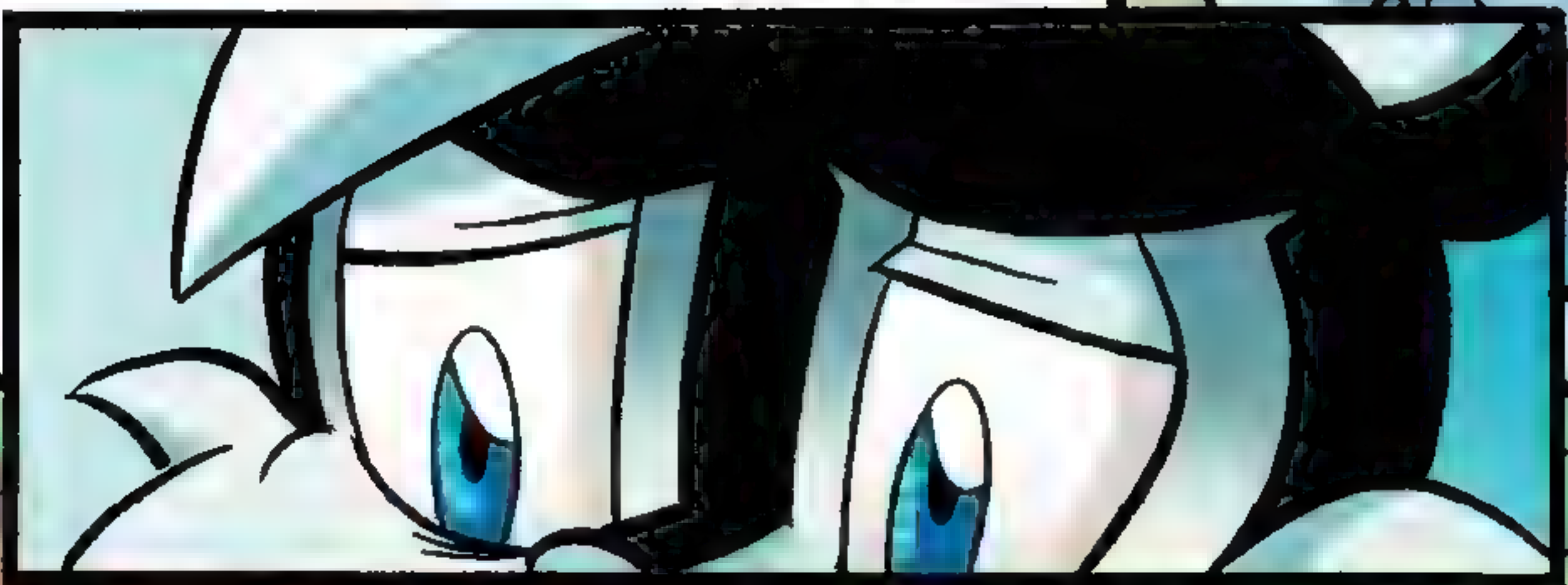
AND I KNOW WHATEVER NAUGUS IS COOKING UP ISN'T "RIGHT."

I'M SURE YOUR WIFE WOULD AGREE...



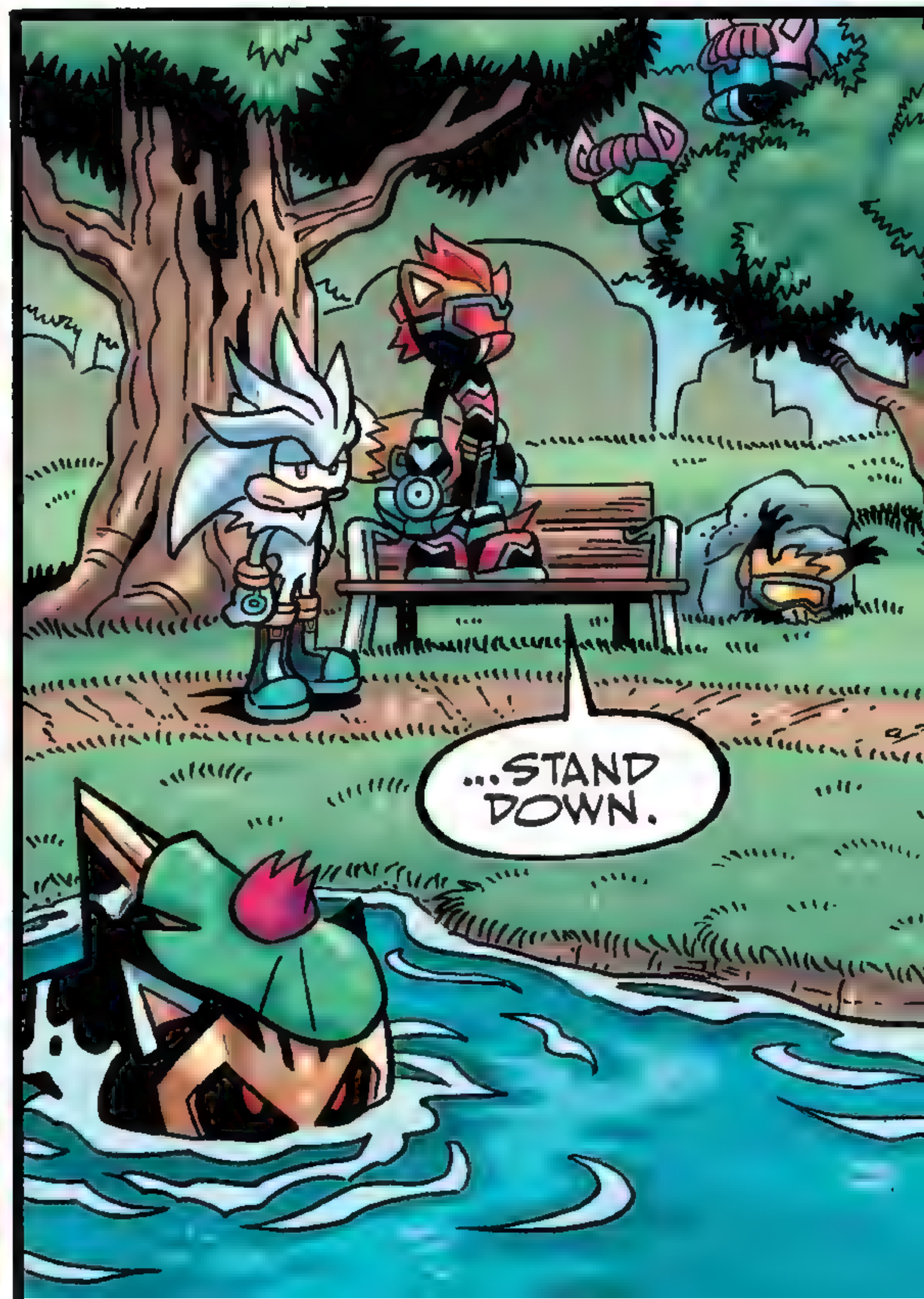
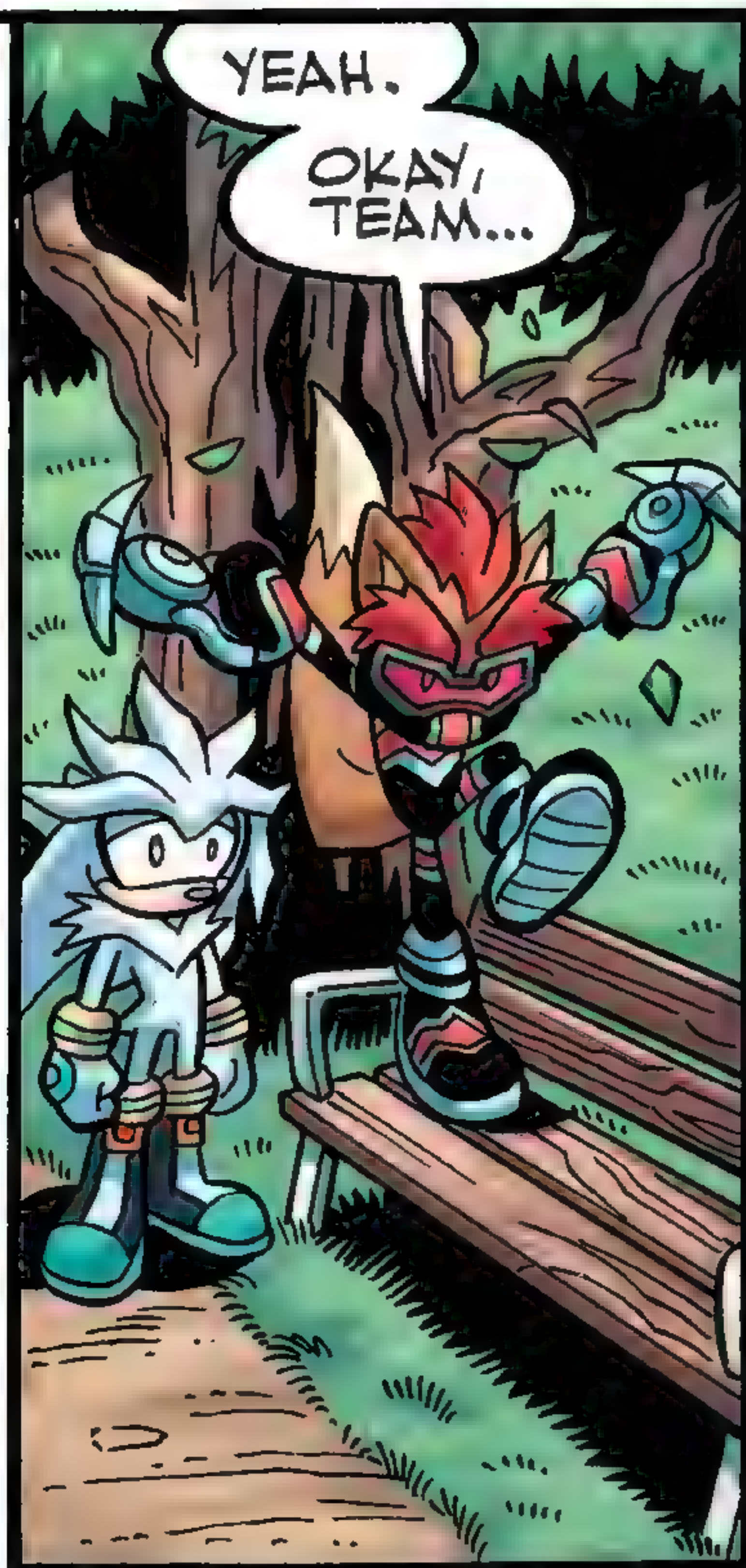
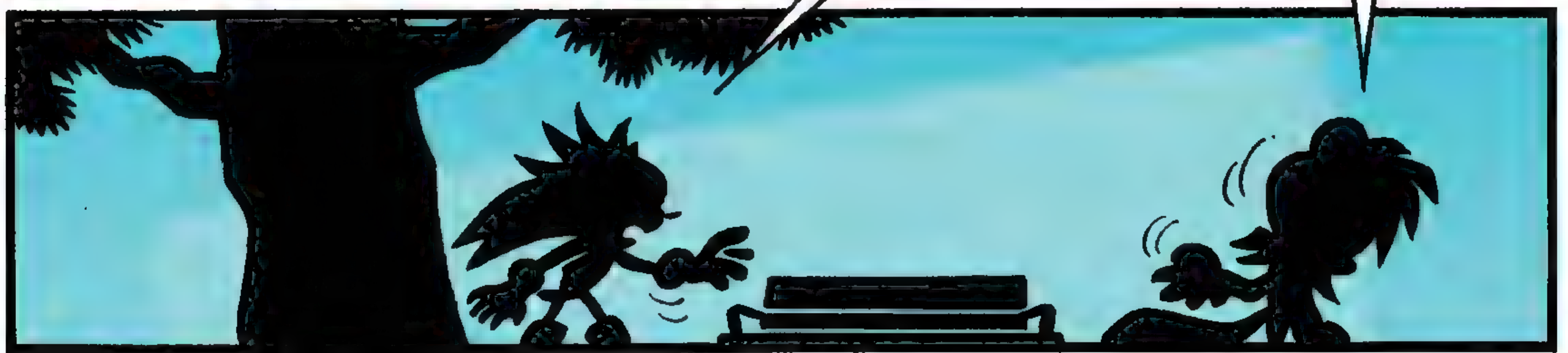
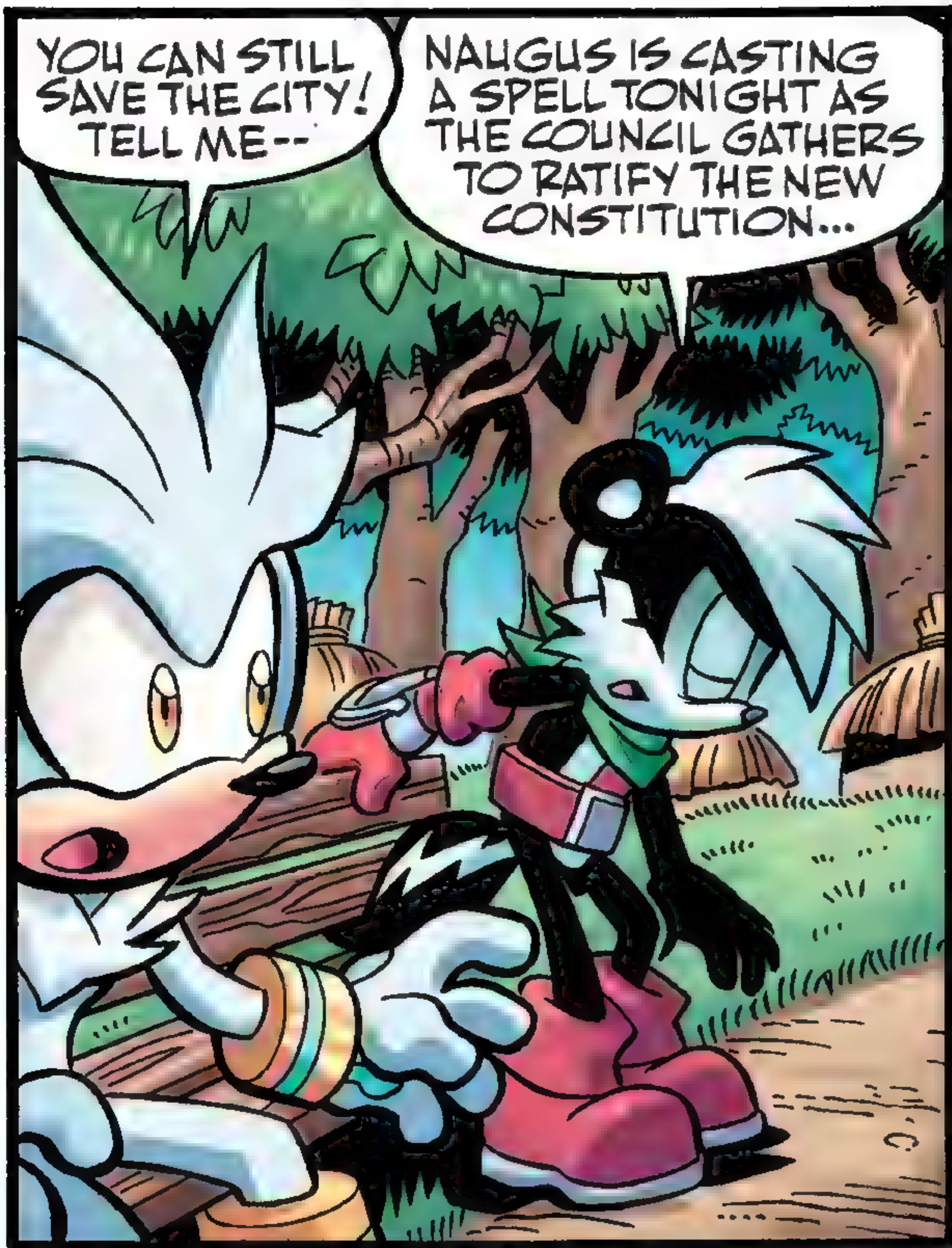
LOW BLOW, I KNOW! BUT YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN!

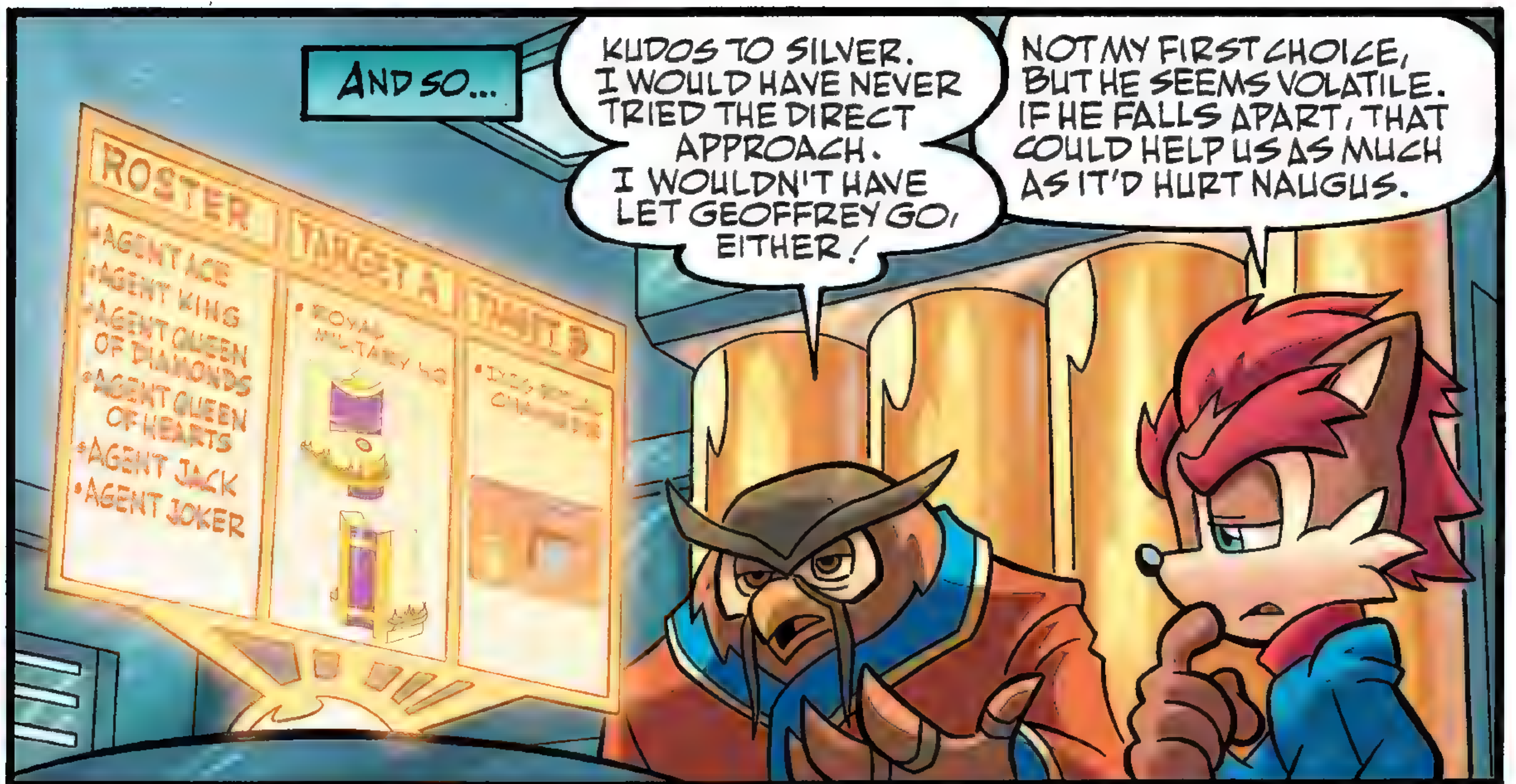
SHE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ON BOARD WITH ANY OF THIS!

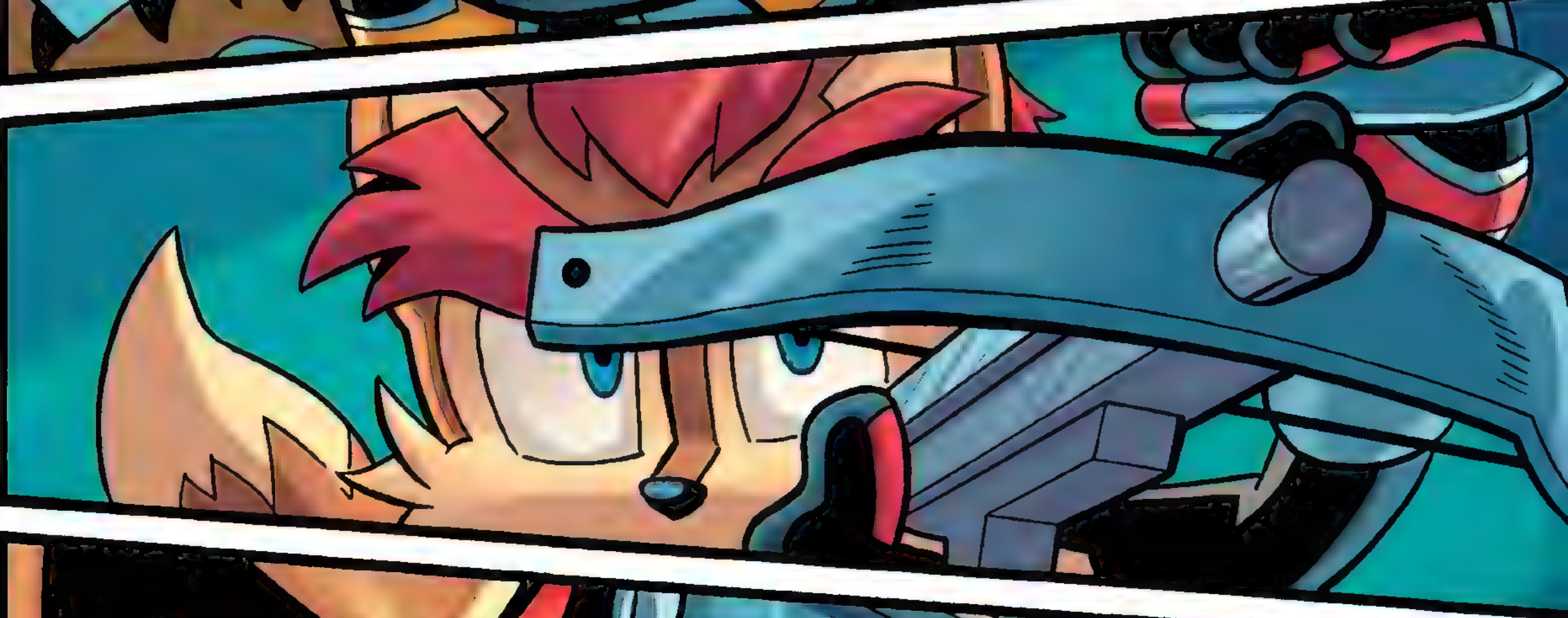
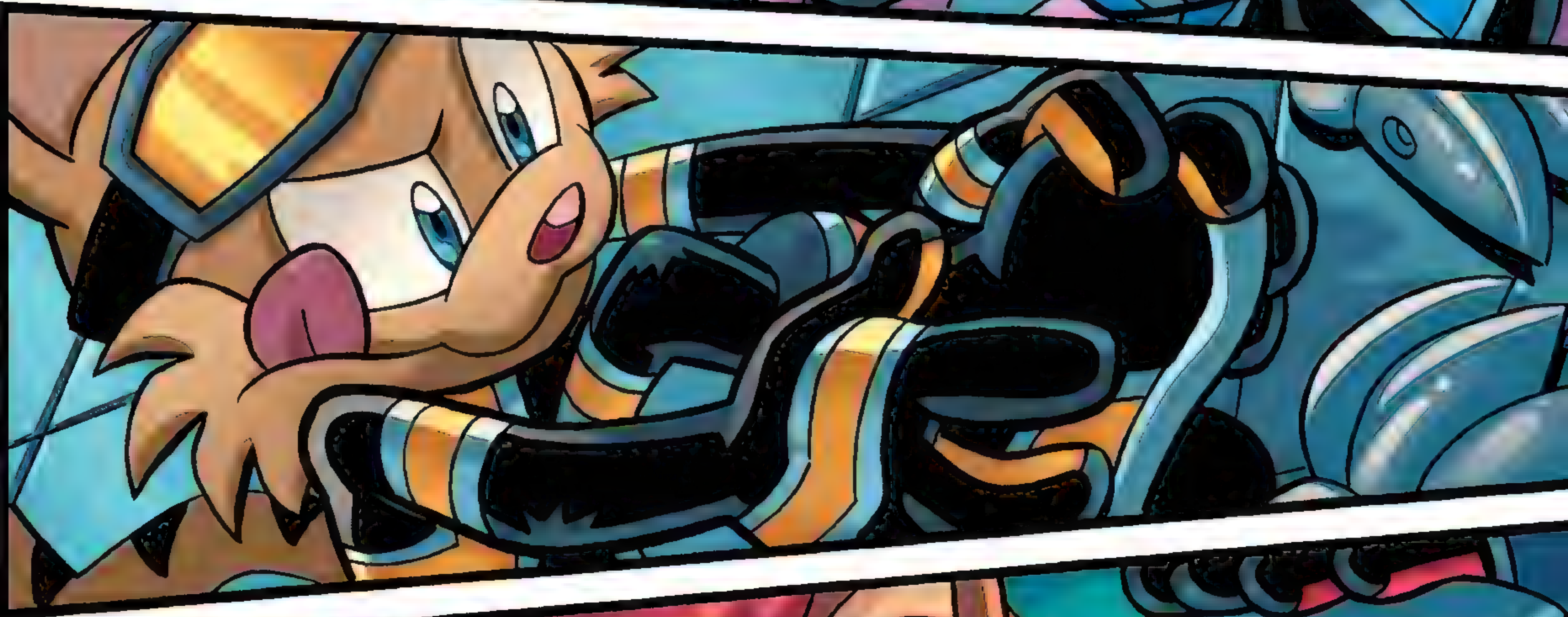
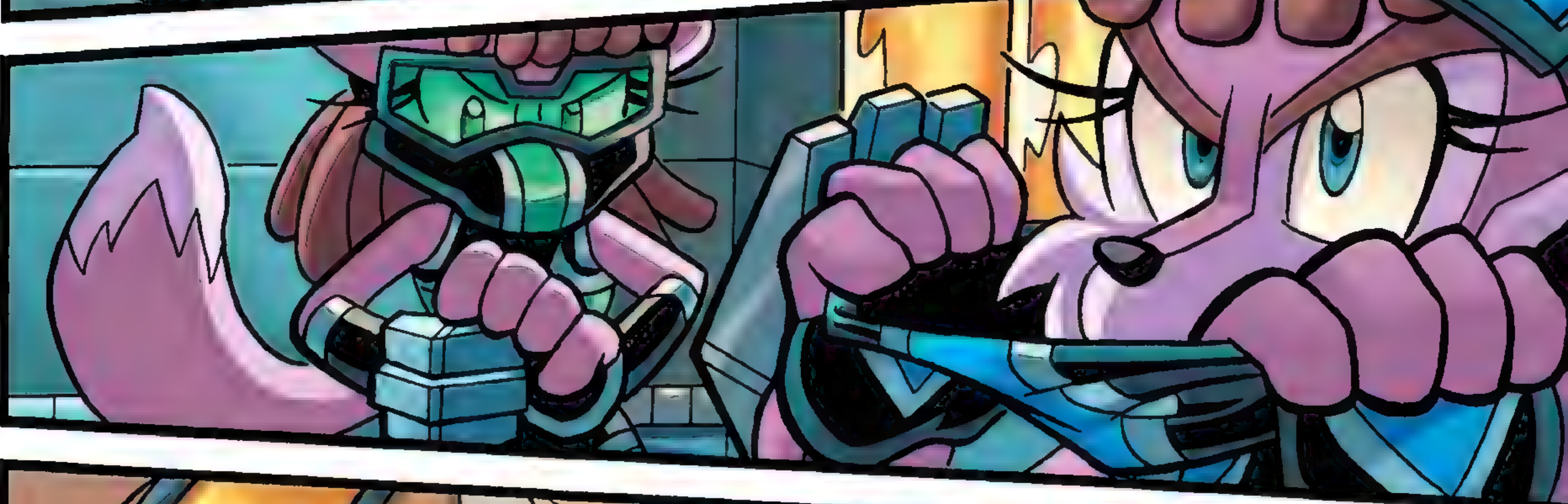
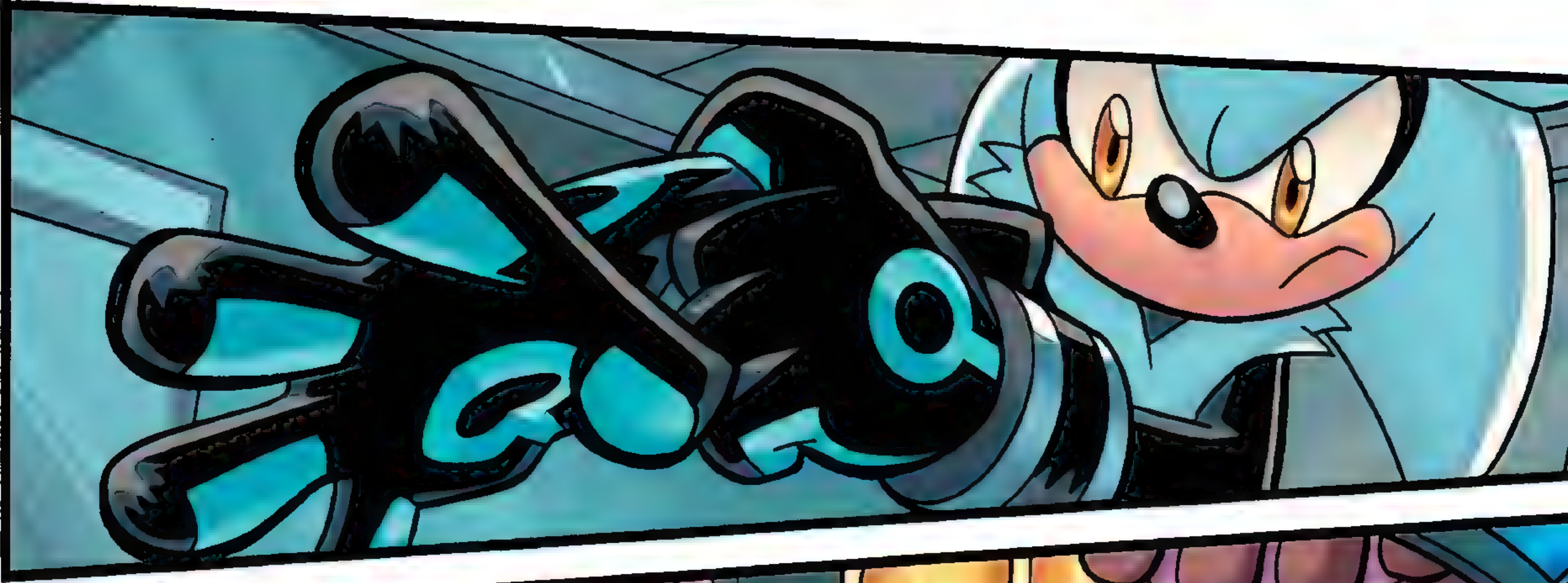


==sigh!==

YOU'RE RIGHT. BUT IT'S TOO LATE FOR ME, KID.









LET'S GO!
**SECRET
FREEDOM
FIGHTERS!**

WE'LL
STOP NAUGUS,
SAVE THE CITY,
OR **DIE
TRYING!**

**UNSUNG
HEROES**
PART THREE: **OCCUPATIONAL
HAZARDS!**

THIS IS IT! WILL THIS BE THEIR FINEST HOUR?
OR WILL THIS BE THEIR LAST MISSION?!
THE THRILLING CONCLUSION NEXT TIME!
UNTIL THEN, CHECK OUT **SONIC SUPER
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the column that will editorially comment, or die trying!

THE SECRET FREEDOM FIGHTERS HAVE ASSEMBLED!

As our heroes prepare for their biggest battle ever, the citizens of New Mobotropolis remain completely unaware of the danger that they're all in. Of course, such is the point of the Secret Freedom Fighters - to work in the shadows and do whatever is necessary to defend the kingdom and ensure the safety of its citizens!

Get ready for a show-down brawl of EPIC proportions next issue as Ixis Naugus and Geoffrey St. John go head-to-head with the SFF! It's a battle you CAN'T miss, and it leads directly into Sonic the Hedgehog #241 which will mean big changes for the Acorn Kingdom!

COVER PROCESS FROM SKETCH TO FINAL PENCILS BY TRACY YARDLEY!



And on a separate note, I want to extend a gigantic "thank you!" to everyone who attended this year's Sonic/Mega Man panel at San Diego Comic Con as well as everyone who swung by the Archie booth to say "hello!". We really blew the lid off of SDCC this year and it's all thanks to you fans!

SEE YA NEXT MONTH! - Paul



SFF PENCILS BY TRACY YARDLEY!

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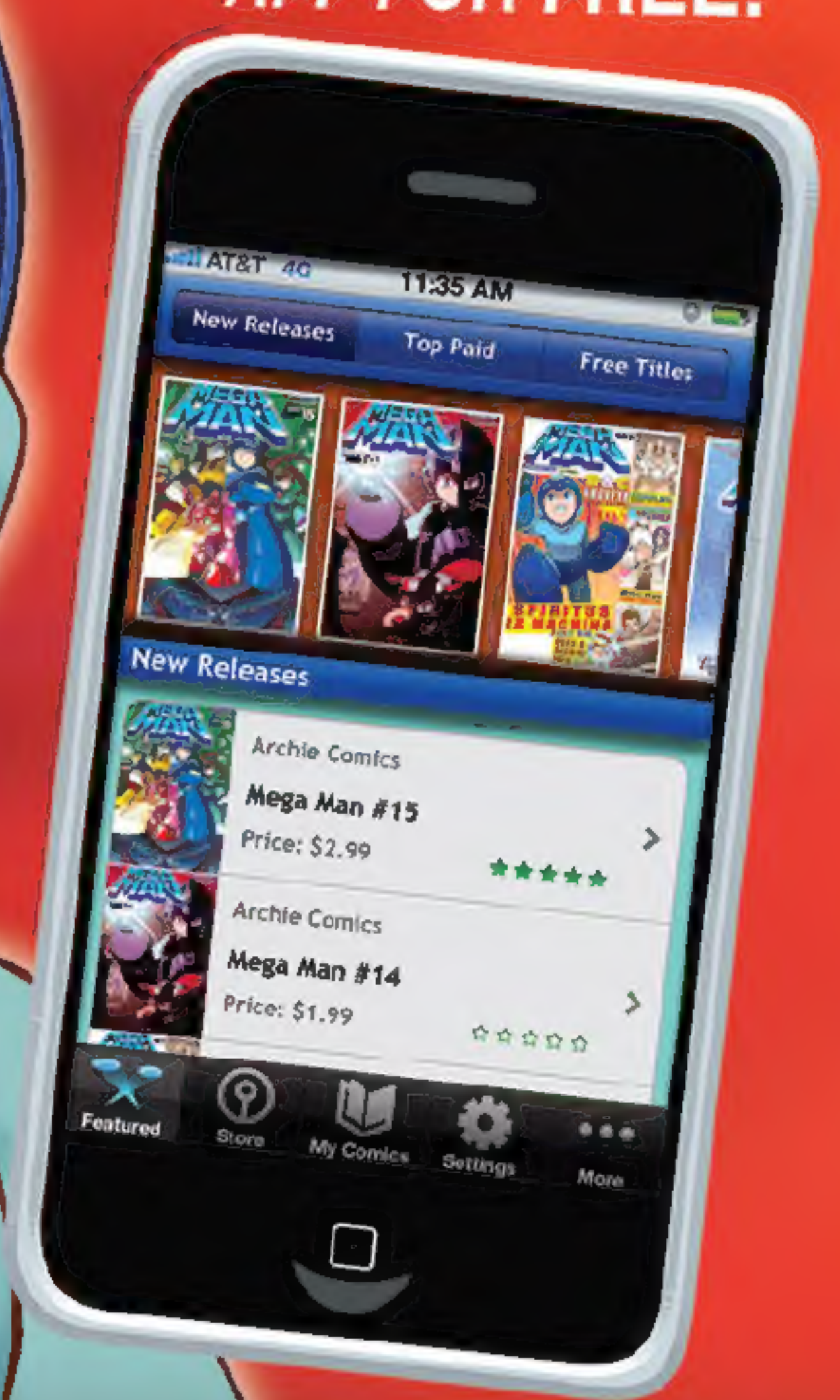
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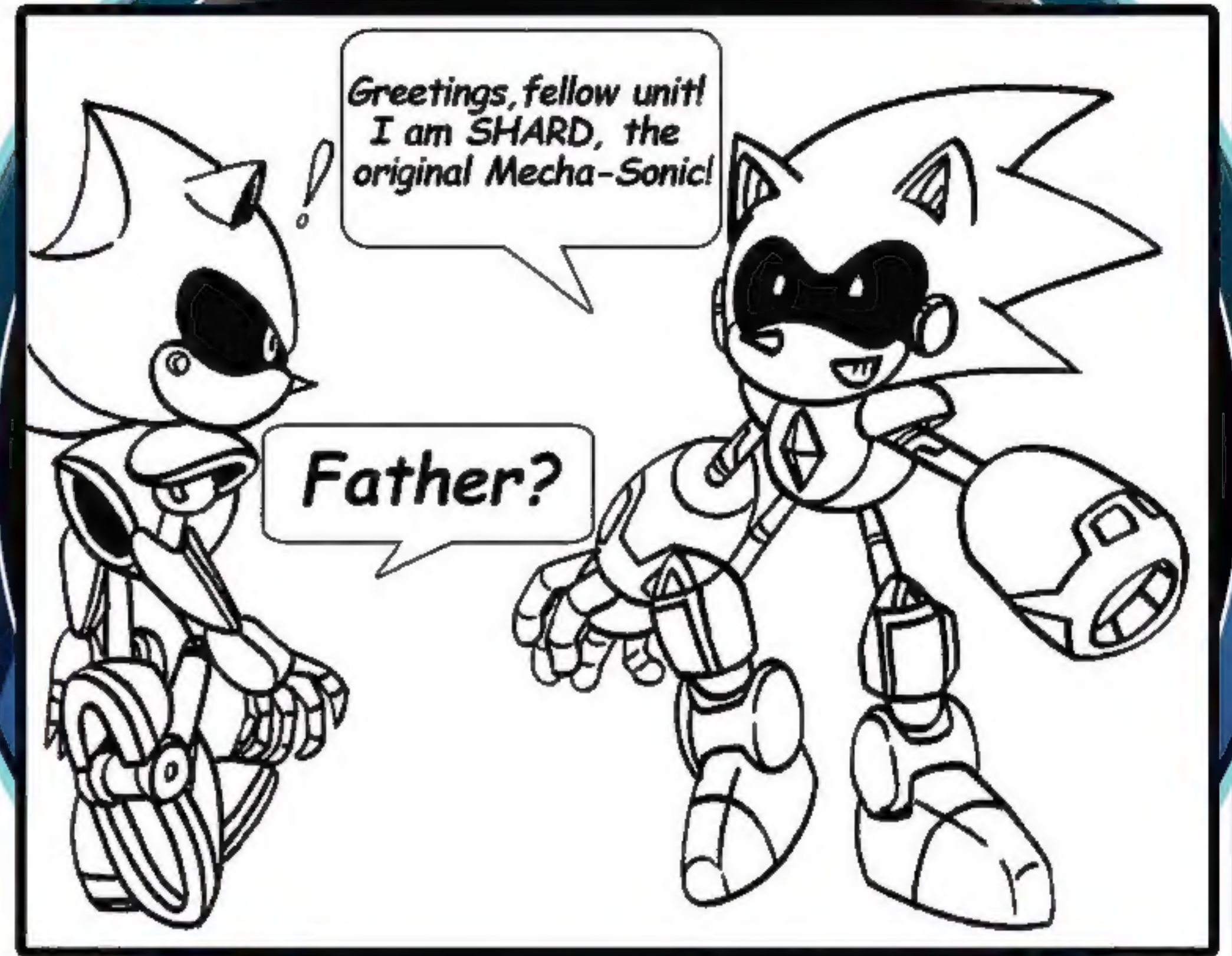
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FAN FUNNIES!



Juan R. from Minnesota



Heather E.
from Maryland



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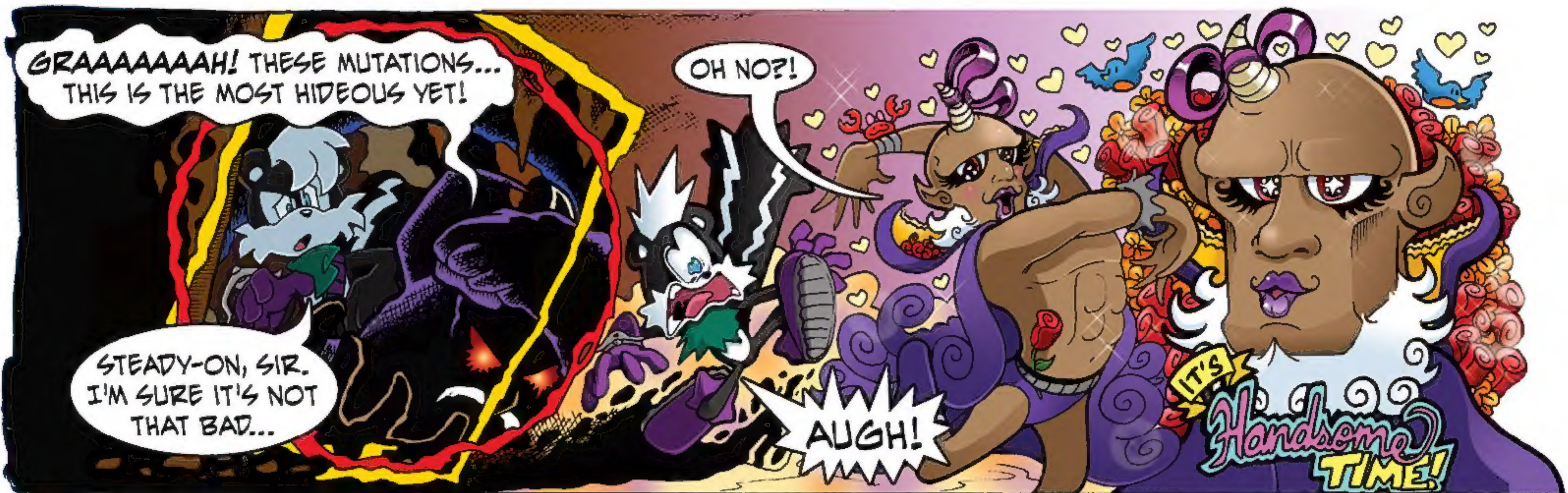
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THE SECRET FREEDOM FIGHTERS!



SCRIPT: IAN FLYNN PENCILS: JONATHAN GRAY INKS: GARY MARTIN COLORS: ALEAH BAKER

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COMING SOON!
NEXT ISSUE: 44



UNsung HEROES:
THE CONCLUSION!
IT'S TIME TO WRAP THINGS
UP AS THE SECRET
FREEDOM FIGHTERS FINALLY
CONFRONT NAUGUS IN...
SECRET FREEDOM
PART 4 (of 4)

ON SALE THE WEEK OF 09/25/12!

SONIC THE HEDGEHOG: 240



TEAM FREEDOM
VS. TEAM METAL!

NEW MOBOTROPOLIS IS UNDER
ASSAULT! WILL THE CITY
SURVIVE?!

"HEROES PART II"
ON SALE THE WEEK OF 09/04/12

Dear 'My Sonic Universe,'
I would like to have an interview with Silver and ask some questions...if that's okay with you guys (and Silver.)

Sure thing! Silver, take the wheel.

It's no use! Just kidding, bring it on!

1. My first question is: how did you get your psychic powers?

I don't really remember myself! I just always had them! It's a good thing too, because my adventures always seem to be so chaotic!

2. What the heck are you doing with Mogul?! In STH 56, he tried to destroy Mobius using Angel Island as a battering ram. (I'm pointing at STH 56 page 11)

Everyone makes mistakes, I know I sure do! But just like my mentor, I'm going to try to amend past mistakes for a better future!

Thanks, Silver and good luck!

Thank you, Chris!

Sonic Fan,
Chris E.
Pennsylvania

Thanks for writing in, Chris!

Dear 'My Sonic Universe,'
Hello! I just started to read your comics; I love them! I just want to ask, when was Silver's first appearance in the comics?

Silver first appeared back in STH 194!

I hope you make another video game story. Bye!

David V.
New Jersey

Thanks, David! Check out our Sonic and All Stars Racing game story coming soon!

SEE Y'ALL NEXT MONTH!

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ON SALE SEPTEMBER

SU #44
SECRET FREEDOM pt4

IT'S YOUR SONIC UNIVERSE!

We want your input! Write & tell us what you're likin', lovin', or what's leaving you in the dust! Remember, include "My Sonic Universe" in the subject line on your letter or e-mail! It's your Sonic Universe, after all, so drop us a line!

SUBJECT: THE HEDGEHOG SONIC
SUBJECT: INTS MAUGUS



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